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BADEN-POWELL

The Hero of Mafeking

W. FRANCIS AITKEN

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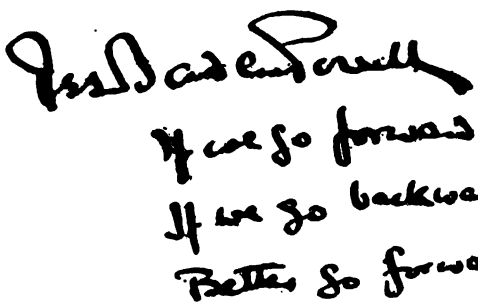
BADEN-POWELL

THE HERO OF MAFEKING

Yrs Baden Powell

If we go forward we die,
If we go backward we die,
Better go forward and die.



COLONEL BADEN-POWELL'S AUTOGRAPH, FROM AN ALBUM.

Photo by] [*Elliott and Fry.*

MAJOR-GENERAL R. S. S. BADEN-POWELL.

BADEN-POWELL

THE HERO OF MAFEKING

BY

W. FRANCIS AITKEN

WITH PORTRAIT

London
S. W. PARTRIDGE & CO.
8 AND 9, PATERNOSTER ROW
1900

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SIXTH IMPRESSION.]

PREFACE

IN the following pages an attempt is made to give some account of the life of the man who has, amidst unimaginable difficulties and against overwhelming odds, held Mafeking for the Empire for more than two hundred weary days of siege. When the war began Colonel Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell was practically as unknown to the public as were most of the gallant men he gathered round him to help him in the task he had undertaken. To all, from the Queen downwards to the schoolboy who proudly wears a medallion portrait of the hero of Mafeking as a badge of courage, the personality of Baden-Powell has become as familiar as that of the veteran Field-Marshal Lord Roberts. And, as if they were a pack of schoolboys, the British public have given their idol a pet name. To all the world as to his intimate friends the defender of Mafeking is "B.-P." This popularity is not a matter of surprise. The wonder is rather that all Baden-Powell did before the commercial capital of the Bechuanaland Protectorate was heard of by most people was practically unnoticed. A glance at the ordinary books of biography will show how completely Baden-Powell had been passed over by all save those with whom he had come into social or professional contact.

It was said of him in his school days that "He was always preparing." It may now be said that he was always preparing for Mafeking. How he tried to prepare the nation for the trial will be appreciated by even the most cursory student of his remarkable career. In India, South Africa, Ashanti he rendered splendid service to the Empire before the present campaign was started. And there is evidence that not only in the countries named, but also on the continent he had done good work the proofs of which are now pigeon-holed in the gloomy building known as the War Office. Such men as Baden-Powell, though they may not commend themselves to the staunch upholders of what is known as the "kid-glove and eye-glass letter-of-the-regulations" branch of officialdom, and may not win admission to the ranks of the decorated, do incalculable service in knitting together the bonds of Empire.

Then apart from his characteristics as a soldier, Baden-Powell has endeared himself to all by the magnetism of a happy genius and a readiness to help wherever help has been needed that he could give. "A brave captain," says Sir Philip Sidney, "is as a root out of which (as branches) the courage of his soldiers doth spring." And though of the brave garrison of Mafeking it can be said, in the words of Tennyson, that, handful of men as they were at the onset, they were

> "English in heart and in limb,
> Strong with the strength of the race to command,
> to obey, to endure"—

it must not be forgotten that the presence in Mafeking of such a body of Englishmen is to be attributed to Baden-Powell's innate knowledge of men, his power to draw them together and to draw from them the best of which they were capable.

W. F. A.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	MÉZIÈRES AND MAFEKING—A REMARKABLE FAMILY—"B.-P.'S" CHILDHOOD—THE BOY THE FATHER OF THE MAN	9
II.	SOME CHARTERHOUSE MEMORIES—"OLD BOYS" AT THE FRONT—JOWETT AT FAULT—DEPARTURE FOR INDIA	18
III.	IN INDIA—A NEW PIED PIPER—AN IDEAL REGIMENTAL OFFICER—ASCETICISM AND SUBTLETY	27
IV.	PIG-STICKING—A REVELATION OF CHARACTER—WINNER OF THE KADIR CUP—THE CHARMS AND UTILITY OF "PUGGING"—PLAY-ACTING UNDER DIFFICULTIES—A NARROW ESCAPE	35
V.	FIRST VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA—THE ZULULAND OPERATIONS OF 1888—THREE YEARS IN MALTA—A FRIEND TO "TOMMY ATKINS"—SELECTED FOR SPECIAL SERVICE IN ASHANTI	44
VI.	ORGANISING A NATIVE LEVY AT CAPE COAST CASTLE—A CHANCE MEETING IN AN AFRICAN SWAMP—THROUGH THE ADANSI FOREST—PREMPEH'S DOWNFALL—PROMOTION—AGAIN GAZETTED FOR SPECIAL SERVICE	54
VII.	BELFAST TO BULUWAYO—MAFEKING IN 1896—CAUSES OF THE MATABELE RISING—NOT A "NIGGER-HATER"—SOME CLOSE SHAVES	66

CHAP. PAGE

VIII. "IMPEESA" (THE WOLF)—ON THE TEACHINGS OF HISTORY—"NERVES"—NIGHT THOUGHTS—A VISION OF THE VELDT—AN IMPRESSION OF TABLE MOUNTAIN . . 79

IX. "COLONEL 'B.-P.' AND INCIDENT OF PRETTY GIRL"—"I AM A NERVOUS MAN"—OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF SERVICES IN RHODESIA—MEERUT AND NATAL—THE CALL TO MAFEKING 91

X. ON THE EVE OF WAR—MILITARY RESOURCES—FORESTALLING AN ECONOMICAL GOVERNMENT—SOME OF "B.-P.'S" COLLEAGUES—MAFEKING IN 1899—A BAND OF BRAVE WOMEN 98

XI. "B.-P.'S" FAREWELL WISH—KRAAIPAN DISASTER—PROMPT REPRISAL—POLITE LETTER-WRITING—"FOUR HOURS' BOMBARDMENT: ONE DOG KILLED"—GENERAL CRONJE BRINGS UP A HEAVY SIEGE-GUN—"A LAST CHANCE"—THE ATTACK ON CANNON KOPPIE 110

XII. THREE HUNDRED BOERS "CAPTURE" LADY SARAH WILSON—VILJOEN EXCHANGED—GENERAL CRONJE GOES SOUTH—GENERAL SNYMAN ANGRY—THE VALUE OF SUNDAY—A LETTER HOME—THE CHRISTMAS ARMISTICE—THE GREAT ASSAULT ON GAME TREE FORT . . . 120

XIII. NEW YEAR'S EVE: A SIMPLE SERVICE—REDUCED RATIONS—RELIEF "IN A FEW WEEKS"—"CAN YOU HOLD OUT TILL MAY?"—IGNORING THE GENEVA CONVENTION—KING FEVER AND HIS COLLEAGUES—PANIC? . . 134

XIV. RENEWED CONFIDENCE—COLONEL PLUMER'S GALLANT EFFORTS TO REACH THE BELEAGUERED GARRISON—MOVEMENTS IN THE SOUTH—"THE PANGS OF HUNGER"—AN UGLY RUMOUR FROM PRETORIA—FEELING AT HOME—A PEN-PORTRAIT DRAWN IN MAFEKING—A BOER TRIBUTE 145

XV. MESSAGE FROM THE QUEEN—"B.-P.'S" "MOST CHEERY TELEGRAM" TO "BOBS"—THE RELIEF—HOW THE NEWS WAS RECEIVED—AN EMPIRE'S JOY 161

BADEN-POWELL

The Hero of Mafeking

CHAPTER I

Mézières and Mafeking—A Remarkable Family—"B.-P.'s" Childhood—The Boy the Father of the Man.

BETWEEN St. Bruno, the Monk of Chartreuse, and Robert Baden-Powell, the old Carthusian, time has flung many centuries. Mézières and Mafeking again may seem to have no connection. Yet are comparisons in which these names confront one another not only permissible, but almost forced upon one. Certainly no Cistercian monk could have learned the lesson of self-discipline more thoroughly than the brilliant commandant of the 5th Dragoon Guards, however the one may have scourged himself and the other set himself to add to the gaiety of nations. And the points of resemblance between the siege of the little town

on the Meuse in 1521 and that of the tiny border city on the Molopo in 1900 include one which is so striking that it may well be given here, though not for the first time.

It is a matter of common knowledge that President Kruger, disappointed and aggrieved beyond measure at the futility of General Cronje's attacks on Mafeking, forwarded certain more or less barbed messages to General Cronje's successor, General Snyman, on the subject of that officer's inability to do what his predecessor had perforce to leave undone. Similarly, when the Chevalier Bayard, without artillery and with only two thousand men, successfully defended Mézières against the Count of Nassau and forty thousand men with one hundred guns, Mary of Hungary scornfully asked the Spanish commander how it came to pass that with such a host at his disposal he failed to take "a crazy pigeon-house!" The Count's reply was, "Because there was an eagle in it." So might Snyman have answered Kruger.

But the object of the short sketch that follows is not so much to appraise its subject as to present in something approaching concrete form the chief incidents in the singularly eventful and deservedly successful career of one of whom the public has made an idol; one to whom we are indebted for most of the brighter moments of a terrible war,

and one who did splendid work for the Empire long before he was sent to prepare for the worst at Mafeking. If the writer should seem to forget them, let the reader remember that the leading characteristics of Colonel Baden-Powell have ever been self-control, self-reliance, self-effacement.

Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell was born at 6, Stanhope Street, London, on February 22, 1857. His father was distinguished as a theologian and natural philosopher, and as a man who fearlessly stood by his convictions. Having graduated B.A. with first class mathematical honours at Oxford in 1817 (he was born in 1796), Mr. Baden Powell (the name was not hyphened until recent years) was in 1820 ordained to the curacy of Midhurst. A year later he became vicar of Plumstead, in Kent, and so remained till 1827, when he was appointed to the Savilian Chair of Geometry in Oxford, an office which he retained down to the time of his death. Whilst at Plumstead the Rev. Baden Powell became a fellow worker with John Herschell, Charles Babbage, and George Airy, and was elected F.R.S. He published a "History of Natural Philosophy" and treatises on the calculus, optics, and the undulatory theory of light.

A Fellow of the Geological Society, Professor Baden Powell contributed not a little by his writings to the general acceptance of geological investi-

gations. But he is best known by his contribution on the evidences of Christianity to the celebrated volume of "Essays and Reviews," which appeared in the same year in which he died (1860), and led to much animated controversy. He opposed the Tractarians, and his liberal views, no less than his kindly nature and great intellectual attainments, won him enduring friendships. He actively interested himself in the cause of University reform, and was the support of a small band of men at Oxford who kept alive the study of the physical sciences during a period when they were not regarded with so much favour as at the present day. His work, "On the Plurality of Worlds," which came out in 1856, is not the least attractive of his brilliant essays. Professor Baden Powell was twice married. By his first wife (Charlotte Pope), who died in 1844, there were born to him three daughters and a son. The last named, Baden Henry Baden-Powell, an old Pauline, entered the Bengal Civil Service in 1861, became a Judge of the Chief Court of the Punjab, was made a C.I.E. in 1884, and has written a great deal on Indian topics.

In 1846 Professor Baden Powell married Henrietta Grace Smyth, the eldest daughter of Admiral William H. Smyth. Admiral Smyth (1788–1865) is said to have been a descendant of the famous

Elizabethan captain who preserved the colony of Virginia, wrote a history of its formation, and, in addition to innumerable other adventures, was captured by Indians when exploring the Chickahominy, and brought before Powhatan. He was about to have his brains battered out, but Pocahontas, the chief's young daughter, "when no entreaty could prevail, got his head in her arms, and laid her own upon his to save him from death." Pocahontas saved the captain's life a second time some two years later by informing him of a plot by her father against him. The veracity of the narrative has been questioned; but the present writer, for one, will not easily be dissuaded from placing faith in its truthfulness. But to return to Admiral Smyth. This officer achieved distinction in many directions, more particularly as a naval surveyor, an astronomer, and an antiquary. He collaborated with Professor Baden Powell, and was one of the founders of the Royal United Service Institution. He is described as being a man of good sense, sterling integrity, with an enthusiasm for fun that was only equalled by his love of science and indefatigable industry in the pursuit of knowledge wherever and whenever opportunity offered.

In 1815 Admiral Smyth married Annarella, daughter of Mr. T. Warington, of Naples. One

of their sons was Sir Warington Wilkinson Smyth, F.R.S., who died in 1890; another was the late Mr. Piazzi Smyth, for many years Astronomer Royal for Scotland, who died quite recently; and a third is Sir Henry Augustus Smyth, K.C.M.G., R.A., F.R.G.S., for some time Governor of Malta. One of the daughters, Georgiana Rosetta, married the late Sir William Flower, K.C.B.; and the other daughter Henrietta Grace it was who became the second wife of Professor Baden Powell and the mother of the defender of Mafeking and of four other sons and one daughter. Of Colonel Baden-Powell's brothers, Sir George Baden-Powell, who died in 1898, was a good traveller and an enthusiastic Imperialist. He was Sir Charles Warren's right-hand man in the negotiations between Great Britain and the Transvaal in 1885; and was adviser to the British Government in the Behring Sea controversy in 1893. Another brother, Major B. F. S. Baden-Powell, of the Scots Guards, has made a great speciality of military ballooning, and his exploits in this direction are frequently attributed to "B.-P." All the brothers have won distinction as if they came to it by inheritance; whilst their sister, Miss D. S. Baden-Powell, is almost as versatile as "B.-P." in art, music, languages, astronomy, and as a student of natural history. She has followed her mother's tastes in the cultivation of bees. Dr. Haig-Brown,

the late headmaster of Charterhouse School, remembers Mrs. Baden-Powell's bee hives when she lived at Hyde Park Gate South forty years ago. Miss Baden-Powell is also skilled in silver *repoussé* work, a choice specimen of which is in the possession of the Princess Louise.

But it is time we came to consider Robert Baden-Powell by himself. He was only four years old when his father died in 1860. His mother, a lady of wide culture and old-time charm of manner, who happily still lives, ruled her children by affection and trust which have been amply repaid by one and all. There is to "B.-P." no hero like his mother. One who knows him intimately describes his love for his mother as passionate devotion. In a much quoted and graphic little sketch which Mr. Harold Begbie recently contributed to the *Pall Mall Gazette* there is a picturesque description of Colonel Baden-Powell's early days. "'B.-P.' and his brothers were," we read, "model children, whose ruling passion was the acquisition of knowledge." Their mother encouraged them in all their sports, and "B.-P." was an excellent rider soon after he had learned to toddle. "Like the children of Matthew Arnold, the young Baden-Powells were born naturalists. When other boys were loafing and plotting mischief, these eager youngsters were roving the woods"—presumably at

Langton, near Tunbridge Wells—"in search of birds' eggs, or scouring the fields for butterflies. They loved the open, and they loved everything that had life. They each had any number of pets, which they tended with exemplary care, but their interest extended to every creature that moved about the meadows and copses of the country, everything that suggested mystery and romance."

"B.-P.," who it is worthy of note had as godfather Robert Stephenson, the great bridge-builder, was until eleven years of age educated at home. "His tutor became his slave." He is described as "the most gentle and placid of pupils, full of industry and eagerness to learn." Everybody loved him, but affection did not spoil him. Industrious and dutiful, "it is necessary to repeat that 'B.-P.' was nothing of the good-little-boy-who-ought-to-have-died." When in his twelfth year "he was sent to a preparatory school, and of this period of his life it is enough to say that the head-master told his people how gladly he would keep him at that school without fee of any kind, because his example and moral courage had done so much for the character and tone of the establishment."

It has often been said of Colonel Baden-Powell that he is a born actor. There is plenty of evidence in support of this assertion. "In his holidays he would study history and geography zealously, but

not with greater zeal than he would compose the most original farces for performance by his admiring brothers and sister." He had, too, at an early age a marked talent for draughtsmanship. Ruskin noted his childish efforts and encouraged them, and at the same time urged Mrs. Baden-Powell not to interfere with her son's habit of drawing with his left hand. "The result is that 'B.-P.' can now make a sketch with his left hand and shade it in at the same time with his right. All his letters are written with his left hand."

And so a happy childhood passed away, and "B.-P." left home and the preparatory establishment for the school of Ellenborough and Havelock, Thackeray and Bowen, and others of England's greatest men—the Charterhouse. With him went his younger brother—B. F. Smyth Baden-Powell, now a major in the 1st Scots Guards.

CHAPTER II

Some Charterhouse memories—"Old Boys" at the front—Jowett at fault—Departure for India.

RARE Ben Jonson, who is supposed to have taken Thomas Sutton, the founder of the Charterhouse School, as a study for his character of Volpone in the comedy of that name, has placed on record in his "Discoveries" most excellent reasons why a boy should be sent to a public rather than to a private school. The old soldier-dramatist never forgot what he owed to the illustrious Camden. Colonel Baden-Powell, on his part, is no more likely to forget what he owes to the Rev. Canon Haig-Brown, LL.D. and the Charterhouse School than they are likely to forget "B.-P." If you seek the Doctor in his old-world sanctuary at Smithfield and ask him if Robert Baden-Powell was especially distinguished in any particular branch of study, the answer will be "No, sir; he could do anything he tried to do."

One of Colonel Baden-Powell's last acts on the

eve of his departure for Mafeking last year was to bid farewell to his old schoolmaster. Shortly before this—on June 26, 1899—he took part in a *matinée* given at the Haymarket Theatre (lent for the occasion by another old Carthusian, Mr. Cyril Maude) to aid the school mission in Southwark. For this performance a special piece was written by Mr. B. C. Stephenson, and in this and in another piece Colonel Baden-Powell acted. The Charterhouse, by the way, has given more than one talented actor to the stage—Mr. Forbes Robertson among the number.

Robert Baden-Powell entered the Charterhouse in January, 1871. He became, as did Colonel Broadwood, of Warren's Horse, a Girdlestonite. The bright intelligence and cheery frankness which he showed during the ordeal of the preliminary examination created at once a favourable impression on the head-master. "That impression," says Dr. Haig-Brown, "was never falsified. From the first he showed an exuberant joyousness, but I cannot recall any incident in which this betrayed him into want of respect for his masters or lack of consideration for his schoolfellows. He became at once a popular boy. This popularity grew as he gave evidence of the many accomplishments he possessed—a singular power of mimicry, a remarkable facility in drawing. Taking one pen in the

right hand and another in the left he could draw two pictures simultaneously. His sketches were beautiful—not, perhaps, evidences of art training, but actual reality. When he had been at the school about two years the removal was made to Godalming. In the somewhat trying circumstances of this removal he proved most useful. He showed remarkable intelligence and liberality of feeling—most boys are so conservative by nature—helping to smooth over the difficulties involved in the change to the new place; and taking up every school institution which was new. He was by nature a born leader of boys as he has since become of men. His progress in school work was steady and continuous." Entering the school by a low form, in his third year he was in the sixth. As a senior "he was well known for the considerate help he gave to young and inexperienced boys in their early trials." There was no school institution which did not receive active and valuable support from him. The traditions of no other public school could have been more in harmony with his temperament.

As in work so in play—"B.-P." proved thorough, attacking his pastimes in a characteristic way. At Godalming the boys had the run of a delightful country; so that his early bent towards woodcraft received no little encouragement. In athletics he greatly distinguished himself. For some time he

kept goal for the football team. In a record dated 1876, the year in which he left school, it is observed of him that he was a good goalkeeper, "keeping cool and always to be depended on." And the goal we are told by those who recollect those days, when the playing fields of Godalming were rivalling those of Eton, was a loadstone to a crowd of admiring youngsters. For their delight "Old Bathing Towel"—as he was affectionately nicknamed—busied his fertile wits when these were not immediately concerned in forestalling the assaults of the opposing team. At critical periods in the game he was wont to give lusty utterance to a great yell which had no little effect in disconcerting the attacking party. He rendered great assistance in the formation of the school Rifle Corps. When in 1874 the school first competed at Wimbledon in the Public Schools competition for the Ashburton Shield, "Private R. S. S. Baden-Powell" took eighth position in the Charterhouse team. A year later, when he again took his place in the team, he had risen to the rank of "Corporal." Where are the members of those teams and others of "Old Bathing Towel's" schoolfellows to-day? So far as can be ascertained the Charterhouse School has been represented at the front by no less than 226 Old Boys.

Of "B.-P.'s" schoolfellows the boy who came

nearest to him in disposition and attainments was Major Prinsep. Among those who were at the Charterhouse with him may be mentioned Count Gleichen, Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. Keith-Falconer, the Rev. Bertram Pollock, master of Wellington College; the Honourable Derek Keppel, Mr. W. F. Sheppard, of the Education Office and a senior wrangler; Colonel Broadwood, and Lieutenant Colvin, V.C., R.E. In a recent interview published in the *Daily News*, Dr. Haig-Brown refers to the late Colonel Keith-Falconer—an old Saunderite, whose young wife was on her way to join him when he was killed at Belmont last November—as a charming fellow. "We remember him," he remarks, "in our cricket eleven. He was the first who made a century against Westminster, and on that occasion scored 103. Lieutenant and Adjutant F. L. Fryer, of the 3rd Grenadiers, an old Bodeite, who also met his fate at Belmont, is mourned by all who knew him as the gentle, brave, true-hearted little fellow that he was. Captain the Hon. D. H. Marsham, also amongst the killed, was a nice boy (he was a Saunderite), though somewhat slow at school. Norman Cowie, lieutenant in the 1st Devons, a Hodgsonite, has experienced some marvellous escapes. One of the first officers to climb the now celebrated heights of Dargai, he yet did not get a scratch. During one of

the early battles in the present campaign he reached the top of Talana Hill in perfect safety—a feat not achieved by any of his brother subalterns, who were all more or less wounded. Then again, in Ladysmith, he alone remained untouched by the shell which burst during breakfast time in the officers' mess of the Devons, spreading wounds and death on all sides. Archibald Tringham, another of our old boys, was there at the same time and was wounded. He was a Weekite. Count Gleichen, who has been wounded during the campaign, was a Saunderite." "A delightful boy we found him," said the Doctor. For the guidance of the uninitiated it should be mentioned that the appellations "Saunderites," "Weekites," &c., apply to the respective houses in the school, which are named after their first masters. The Saunderites were in the head-master's house.

One of Robert Baden-Powell's house-masters has observed that "B.-P." was "just the kind of boy of whom there would be few anecdotes to record." This by way of contrast to the type of "Stalky and Co." But two stories told by Dr. Haig-Brown are well worth chronicling. "On one occasion," said the Master of the Charterhouse, "we had a master who was somewhat shy, and who had contracted a habit of frequently saying to the boys, when they approached him on any matter, 'Don't you see I'm

engaged?' After a time it was whispered, to the interest of all, that his affections had really become engaged. The news got to Baden-Powell, who, on pretence of asking some question, approached the master. The latter, from force of habit, looked up and said, 'Don't you know that I am engaged, sir?'" Dr. Haig-Brown went on to tell how "B.-P.," in that inimitable mimetic way of his, simply ejaculated, "Oh, sir!" The result may be better imagined than described.

The other story shows how ready Baden-Powell was, even as a lad, to "save the situation" in any predicament. "On one occasion when a school entertainment was in progress, a performer 'scratched' at the last moment. The boys were beginning to get somewhat impatient at the long pause, so," added Dr. Haig-Brown, "I said to Baden-Powell, who was sitting next to me, 'We must do something. Cannot you fill the gap?' He immediately consented, and, rushing on to the platform, gave them a bit of his school experiences. Fortunately the French master was not present, for he described a lesson in French with perfect mimicry. It was inimitable. It kept the boys in perfect roars of laughter."

To which reminiscences may be added one told by Mr. Harold Begbie. "Some years after he had left school, Baden-Powell happened to visit Charter-

house on the evening of an entertainment. The funny man failed to turn up, and 'B.-P.' was pressed into service. Among his performances he described an 'At Home,' to which he had been in London, and where he found himself announced as Mr. Bread-and-Fowl. He told how he picked out the only respectable man present as his host, shook hands with him, and found it was the butler. The recital of that adventure, with innumerable comic details, lives in Charterhouse to this day, and the funny man who did not turn up is forgiven."

In May, 1876, Baden-Powell paid a visit to Balliol College, Oxford, and was put through an informal examination by the late Professor Jowett, who expressed the view that he was "not quite up to Balliol form." This opinion, said Dr. Haig-Brown to the present writer, "shook my faith in Jowett's judgment of men." Several members of the family had been to Balliol. It was the college of Sir George Baden-Powell, who carried off the Chancellor's prize in the year that his brother Robert saw Jowett. Dean Liddell, himself an old Carthusian, appears to have arranged that Robert should, in October, have rooms at Christ Church. However, before that plan could be carried into effect, there was, in July, in London, an open examination for direct commissions in the army; and as "B.-P." had decided upon a military career,

he became a candidate. He had no special preparation—no "cramming," and the fact that of 718 candidates he came out fifth, being second for the cavalry, is in itself an interesting comment on the verdict of the Master of Balliol as to "B.-P.'s" "form." Gazetted a sub-lieutenant of the 13th Hussars, he sailed forthwith for the East on the eve of two memorable events—(1) the proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India and (2) the annexation of the Transvaal.

CHAPTER III

In India—A new Pied Piper—An ideal regimental officer—Asceticism and subtlety.

THERE is a temptation to dwell on that first voyage to India taken by the young lieutenant of Hussars in 1876. But the story, to be told with freshness, would need to be told by the traveller himself. For the present it remains in those "letters home" which we may be sure are among his mother's most treasured keepsakes. There too, unless I am much mistaken, are the only complete records of the events in which "B.-P." figured in the long years that followed in the East. And one might have expected this. What should we have known of William Napier—another ideal military type—were it not for his letters? Much, of course, as soldier and as historian; but how little of the man himself, how he bore himself in messroom and battlefield! And what is true in the case of William Napier is true of so many others.

In the meantime, save by reading between the lines of Baden-Powell's published writings, and by scanning the brief official records of his "steps" in the service, and by digesting the "gup" that has grown round his name and has come to be more or less apocryphal, none except relatives and intimate friends, and those who have served with him, can know by what processes in Britain's great dependency and envied military training-ground Baden-Powell qualified himself for the brilliant service he has rendered in Africa since the commencement of the operations in Zululand in 1888. India, in the words of Sir Alfred Lyall, is "the land of regrets." Another has described Africa as the grave of reputations. As to "regrets," these come inevitably to the thoughtful Englishman in the East. They find an echo in Baden-Powell's first big book, though that be one on a professedly light topic—sport. As to "the grave of reputations"—the phrase as given may not be a perfect quotation, but the sense is clear enough—what may be the grave of one man is destined to be but the test of another. The case of Sir George White occurs to one. The man who held Ladysmith so heroically, battling against personal ill-health as well as against other foes, has only been in South Africa twice. On the first occasion he was an involuntary sojourner on its soil, being wrecked near Port

Elizaoeth when journeying by the Cape route to India. He then, as later when shut up in Ladysmith, turned adversity into opportunity. And it is his faculty for doing likewise that has made the man who has kept the flag waving at Mafeking.

In India and in the Colonies European child-life has an infinitely more pathetic aspect than is the case at home. The "may be" is so near to the "might have been." As Sir William Hunter has written it, "The price of the British rule in India has always been paid in the lives of little children." In many of the Colonies nature has for the little ones compensation that is not found in the East. Thackeray, who lost his father when he was four years old, and whose mother's influence remained with him through life, was always devoted to children. And no less so is Baden-Powell. The story of the manner in which "B.-P." signalised his arrival in India may have some slight element in it of picturesque exaggeration; but one can quite believe it true in the main, for it is in perfect keeping with all we know of the man. We are told that he marshalled all the European children he could find and marched them up and down the streets of Old Lucknow "to the tune of 'The Girl I Left Behind Me,' played with considerable feeling by himself on an ocarina!" I am not quite certain that an ocarina was the instrument,

but what a delightful vision of a new Pied Piper is called up by this little but significant anecdote!

> "Out came the children running,
> All the little boys and girls,
> With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
> And sparkling eyes, and teeth like pearls,
> Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
> The wonderful music, with shouting and laughter."

And though the Piper might have been "bound for Bagdad" or anywhere else at no distant time, there was nothing but happy reminiscence behind the adventure. "B.-P." had prepared for this sort of thing and for more serious effort whilst helping the "youngsters" in far-away Godalming.

The period from 1876 to 1887 was in India, as in South Africa, one of considerable unrest. So far as the official record given in *The Army List* of Baden-Powell's services goes, the Red Book but repeats what Dr. Haig-Brown has said of his favourite pupil's career at school. It is a record of "steady and continuous progress." Gazetted a lieutenant in the 13th Hussars, on September 11, 1876, Baden-Powell was promoted to be adjutant of his regiment on April 1, 1882 (he continued adjutant till February 17, 1886), and became a captain on May 16, 1883. He got his majority in 1892, following service in South Africa and Malta; a brevet-lieutenant-colonelcy in 1896; became lieu-

tenant-colonel of the 5th Dragoon Guards in 1897, and in the same year was appointed brevet-colonel of that regiment. He made an ideal regimental officer. Few but military men have anything like an adequate idea of the trying duties of an adjutant. Suffice it, for the understanding of what follows, that the sergeants of a regiment are peculiarly qualified to judge the adjutant. "Some sergeants in the 13th Hussars were once asked if the men liked 'B.-P.' After a pause one of them said, hesitatingly, 'Like him? Well, I shouldn't say they like him'; then, in a burst, 'Why, they worship him.'" And this (writes Mr. Begbie, who of all writers on Baden-Powell has got nearest the heart of his subject) "is a fact. The men love him. Their love is prompted not by any leniency or coddling on the part of Baden-Powell, but by his tireless devotion to their service, and by his faith in their intelligence and good sense. . . . As a regimental officer he does not content himself with putting his nose into the barrack-room door once a day to ask if the dinners are properly cooked. He gets to know his men personally, encourages them to leave their beds alone in the afternoon, and get out into the open, either for sport or instruction in the interesting parts of soldiering." "B.-P." indeed has been a sort of Imperial adjutant. A glance at the derivation of the word will explain my

meaning. It is a word derived from a Latin root signifying "to help often or much."

During his stay in India Baden-Powell had some opportunity of studying the graver questions associated with British rule. The year 1877, in which the Queen was proclaimed Empress, is also to be remembered as a grievous famine year. There arose during the periods of office of Lord Lytton, Lord Ripon, and Lord Dufferin, serious questions as to the liberty of the press, native disaffection, unrest on the North-West frontier, Russian activity; and then there was the Afghan war of Lord Roberts' part in which so much has recently been recalled.

The "gorgeous east" has other lessons for us than those of luxury—lessons in addition to those enumerated by Max Müller in his Oxford lectures, "What can India Teach Us?" It is the home of asceticism, the birthplace of "the art of going without and doing without." Baden-Powell learned this art thoroughly—as if in preparation for Mafeking. His old master says of him "he was always preparing"; and "B.-P." acquired in India a quite remarkable power of going for long periods without food, sleep, or rest of any kind. An officer under whom he has served has written of Baden-Powell: "I have always considered him without exception the most indefatigable, hard-working officer I have ever come across; ready at any moment to under-

take any duty, however arduous. . . ." He is an enemy of over-indulgence in any form—if we except work from the category. If he has ever felt anything like contempt for any living thing the feeling must have been aroused by some spectacle of gluttony or selfishness or sloth. One soon finds him regretting the selfishness and nomadic nature of much of European life in India. He has drawn a striking picture of that lazy *bon vivant* the old boar who favours the crops of sugar-cane. These crops stand about twelve months from sowing to cutting; "and so a boar, on coming into residence, has at least nine months of quiet ease before him without any necessity to move a yard in search of food." It is a difficult matter to persuade the boar to come out. "He knows how unprepared he is in wind and limb for a race for life across country, and so long has he been a stay-at-home that he cannot be certain that his former distant places of refuge can still be found: like the Taquir's description in Igd-i-Gil, he is—

> ". . . void of wisdom,
> Being o'er filled with food, even to the nose." *

Of similar tone is a note in Baden-Powell's Matabele Diary: "14th May. A passenger [on the outgoing liner], who so far had spoken little except to

* "Pig-sticking or Hog Hunting." Harrison, 1889.

ask for 'another whiskey,' found dead in bed this morning, and buried overboard. Poor chap! He had opened a conversation with me the night before, and seemed a well-intentioned, gentle soul, although a drunken bore."* If Baden-Powell is not a teetotaler, he must be almost one. It is a matter of fairly common knowledge that he eschews tobacco.

Then what fascination must the subtlety of the native character have had for the young Hussar! Extremes meet here: East and West. But it is doubtful if the Indian of the West can give many points to the Indian of the East in subtlety. Perhaps, however, both are descendants from some far-distant stock. And as nothing from his infancy ever delighted Baden-Powell more than to beat an opponent at his own game, whether the opponent were human or animal, contact with the Eastern mind must have had no little effect on the development of "B.-P." the scout.

* "The Matabele Campaign, 1896." Methuen, 1897.

CHAPTER IV

Pig-sticking—A revelation of character—Winner of the Kadir cup—The charms and utility of "Pugging"—Play-acting under difficulties—A narrow escape.

COLONEL BADEN-POWELL'S book on Pig-sticking is worth study for more than one reason. It is a wonderful revelation of character as well as a standard guide to one of the finest branches of sport in the world. In the first place he goes straight for his subject, leaving its antique aspect to the antiquarian. He gives you the results of his study and his experience adapted to the needs of the present. Only those who have gone over the same ground will appreciate the pains he has been at to classify his material. He is practical and orderly in his thinking. But he makes you feel that he sees what lies beyond —the point of ultimate utility. In play-acting this is the maximum of fun or entertainment to the onlooker. In sport it is the effect on the sportsman, and through the sportsman on the profession to which he belongs and those with whom he is thrown into

contact whilst pursuing that profession, and on the national interests that profession exists to serve. The pages are full of a love for outdoor life. The writer is obviously one to whom the world is a great school: to whom the man who is wilfully inert and disinclined to make the best of every opportunity appears as the self-satisfied dunce appears to the average healthy schoolboy. He discloses a characteristic faith in the virtues of encouragement. He gives advice and instruction without assuming "superiority." Whilst he is studying nature you divine that he is studying man at the same time. The book unostentatiously but adequately serves to show how deeply its author appreciates the necessity of studying "the native view" of what strengthens and what weakens "our hold on India," and of watching the expansion of Russia in Central Asia. How characteristic is his comparison, or to speak by the card the comparison he adopts, between fox-hunting and hog-hunting, suggesting, but forcibly suggesting, that perfect conditions destroy the soul of a man's work whether it be for pleasure or for profit. And then as regards the quarry and its pursuit you see that he is chivalrous even to a boar. But to get the full benefit to be derived from this book it must be read at first hand.

Taking up pig-sticking with enthusiasm Baden-Powell of course secured the blue ribbon of the

sport in India—the Kadir cup. This he won in 1883, a year in which there were no fewer than fifty-four starters for that much-coveted trophy, which is given by the Meerut Tent Club, the leading club of its kind in the whole of the northern part of India. And here is a significant fact to be recorded. On that memorable occasion "B.-P." rode a horse named "Patience. Patience and skill brought him

"a full bowl of rich content,"

but we may be sure the pleasures of the chase were as much to him as the token of victory. And the virtue has carried him—how much further than the Kadir cup! His favourite motto is: "Don't flurry; patience gains the day." He has another favourite saying which runs near to that already given as a working axiom, and is a little more subtle. It is to the effect that "a smile and a stick will carry you through any difficulty in the world." Lieutenant Colonel Newnham-Davis, a soldier who has distinguished himself in various parts of the world, says that "the man who can win a Kadir cup must have all the lore of the jungle at his fingers' ends, must see further and judge quicker than other men, in addition to being a perfect horseman." It is a legitimate question whether, since "B.-P." has so well proved his contention that the sport of pig-

sticking provides us with our best cavalry school, the authorities are any the more inclined than they used to be to favour its growth.

This brings us to the connection between the sport to which we have been referring and the art of scouting, which art Baden-Powell has brought under world-wide notice in a manner comparable only to that in which Captain Mahan has emphasised the importance of sea power. "There were brave men before Agamemnon." If I mistake not, one Philip Massinger, a poor dramatist, drew attention to the needs of the navy before Alfred Mahan or the English Navy League. And doubtless there have been scouts before Baden-Powell; but they are almost forgotten—outside, one had perhaps better add, the pages of Fenimore Cooper. But to-day, as regards the scouting, we have to remember that there has been one amongst us for years doing all he knew by precept and by practice to prepare himself and to prepare us for the trial we are now passing through in South Africa, and that his voice has been very much like that of one crying in the wilderness—if recent events be at all a criterion.

Here are some suggestive words published by Baden-Powell in 1889 with regard to pig-sticking as a training for the soldier: "The most sporting of all methods of finding pig is by 'pugging' or track-

ing them to their lairs by their footmarks or 'pugs.' . . . There exist numerous professors of the art who are trained to it from childhood, and who can follow signs that are quite invisible to the untrained eye. An Englishman, though he may never hope to attain the skill of a professional, may, with a little trouble and continual practice, learn to track well enough for ordinary emergencies, and once tried it is a pursuit that he will not quickly give up; for there is an indescribable charm about pugging unknown to one who has never practised it. Without doubt the constant and varied exercise of the inductive reasoning powers called into play in the pursuit must exert a beneficial effect on the mind, and the actual pleasure of riding and killing a boar is doubly enhanced by the knowledge that he has been found by the fair and sporting exercise of one's own 'bump of woodcraft.' The sharpness of intellect which we are wont to associate with the detective is nothing more than the result of training that inductive reasoning which is almost innate in the savage. To the child of the jungle the ground with its signs is at once his book, his map, and his newspaper. Remember the volume of meaning contained in the single print of Friday's foot on Crusoe's beach." Not forgetting the necessity of studying habits as well as "spoor" and "pugs," "B.-P." has developed the thoughts that stirred him when he

wrote the above-quoted passage; with the result that we have in "Reconnaissance and Scouting" * and "Aids to Scouting" † works the fascination of which, even to the ordinary reader, almost rivals that attaching to the classic pages of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes."

By way of a closing reference to the volume on "Pig-sticking" it can, I think—without any offence being given, as assuredly none is implied—be said that it is nearly impossible to read Colonel Baden-Powell's description of the habits of the boar and of the way to fight him without the idea arising in one's mind that if you changed but the names of boar and hunter to Boer and Briton no small portion of the meaning would be applicable to the struggle now going on in South Africa.

> "The pluck of the bull-dog does not beat
> The pluck of the gallant boar."

When the 5th Dragoon Guards were at Meerut in 1897 or 1898 Baden-Powell formed a body of scouts, to whose training he gave the benefit of his own vast and peculiar experience. Beginning with six volunteers, he increased the number to thirty, in the first place stimulating the interest of the men by getting them to read Mr. Conan Doyle's famous detective stories. Midnight was Colonel Baden-

* William Clowes. 1891. † Gale and Polden. 1899.

Powell's favourite time for work. He would sleep most of the day, and carry on scouting operations all through the night. On any night that was particularly black he would send out bodies of men to find their way about the country, with nothing but their own intelligence to guide them. Selecting a starting point in the inky blackness, he would say, "Ride out seven miles from here and find your way back again." The only help he gave them was an injunction to look back at every object passed, most landmarks presenting different views from opposite sides, and the opposite side being, of course, the one seen on the return journey. But he was careful to instil into the minds of his pupils the necessity of being prepared to return by a route other than that taken in the first instance.

But "B.-P." found plenty of time for play as well as for work whilst in India, and there and elsewhere he has contrived to work in the same direction as Lord Roberts for the betterment and popularity of the Service. His faculty for the stage doubtless aided his efforts in more serious directions as well as supplied a needed set-off to the strain of duty. Recognition of his gifts as a comedian spread not only from station to station but to London, and from the capital whose power it is to act as a magnet to the greater part of the national (not to

speak of foreign) talents there reached him, so we are credibly informed, a serious offer of a somewhat lucrative engagement should he care to leave the army for the stage. In fine, his fame as an actor outran, so far as the outside world is concerned, his distinction as a soldier.

The Savoy operas appear to have been special favourites with Baden-Powell, the fine edge of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's satire no less than the ever-delightful music to which the words are wedded finding affinity in his tastes and temperament. Even under moderately favourable conditions amateur theatricals present extraordinary difficulties save to the most expert of stage managers. "B.-P." has saved a dramatic situation on more than one occasion. A splendid case in point is chronicled in connection with the occupation of Kandahar by the British in the eighties. He planned and carried to perfection a performance of "Patience" in the Afghan capital. The reception of the opera was commensurate with the difficulties involved in its presentment. But the key to the success was in the title. And he must have displayed enough patience then to supply an ordinary man for years. All the costumes were of his designing, and as there was no lady of his own land there to help, "B.-P." himself played the part of Ruth.

On another occasion when "Trial by Jury" was to

be given, it appears that it was not discovered until just prior to the performance that the Royal arms had not been provided. "B.-P.," however, was fully equal to the needs of the moment. Making an excursion of inquiry amongst the natives he succeeded in procuring some colours, and with these and the aid of an old shaving brush the difficulty was more than satisfactorily disposed of.

When Kandahar had been evacuated and the troops were returning to Quetta, Baden-Powell had one of his many escapes from an untimely end. In this instance Providence rather than any individual skilfulness proved his best friend. One finds it difficult to associate such carelessness with Baden-Powell, but the truth seems to be that he was actually playing with a loaded pistol—whether he knew that the weapon was loaded or not is not stated. Suddenly there was an explosion, and a bullet entered "B.-P.'s" leg, causing a wound which proved sufficiently disagreeable to leave a lasting reminder behind it.

CHAPTER V

First visit to South Africa—The Zululand operations of 1888—Three years in Malta—A friend to "Tommy Atkins"—Selected for special service in Ashanti.

IT was in the year 1884 that Baden-Powell (then a captain) had his initial experience of the country—Bechuanaland—whose little border town, Mafeking, will always be associated with his name. In 1884 Sir Bartle Frere died; and it is an open question whether, if the proposal made in 1878 by that great administrator for a Bechuana protectorate had been adopted by the British Government at the time it was made, much of the subsequent trouble we have had in that part of the world would have been obviated. Early in 1884 President Kruger with two companions came to England—Mr. Gladstone was then in power—and secured certain modifications of the Pretoria convention, but stipulations were made involving a British protectorate over Bechuanaland. To these stipulations the Boer representatives agreed, doubtless discussing them

with their sympathisers in Germany and Holland, which countries they visited on their return journey. The Volksraad ratified the new agreement; but it was not long before serious trouble broke out. The chief Montsoia was compelled to enter into a treaty with the Boers; a British resident named Bethell, who was acting as agent to one of the Bechuana chiefs, came to his death by foul means; and though at the Cape sympathy with the Transvaalers was not inconsiderable nor voiceless, feeling ran so high both there and in England that the Home authorities resolved to assert British authority. Parliament voted a big sum—£725,000—for the purpose, and an expedition was arranged, the command of which was given to Sir Charles Warren. Peace was eventually attained and fresh agreements were entered upon, as to the pros and cons of which this is not the place to adjudicate. But as Baden-Powell went to South Africa with Sir Baker Russell to assist in the reconnaissance work regarded as a necessary preliminary to the Warren expedition, some brief indication of the condition of affairs at that time as between the Britons and the Boers is likely to be helpful to the reader's memory, and perhaps to some extent may be suggestive. It is interesting to remember that in 1884, in addition to giving trouble in Bechuanaland on the west, the Boers were active on the east. England, on the death of Cetewayo,

refusing to exercise sovereign rights over Zululand, the Transvaalers installed Dinizula in his father's stead, and succeeded ultimately in securing the best portion of Zululand. British Zululand was not annexed till 1887.

There are many other reasons for studying 1884 from the Imperial standpoint. Passing on, however, we find Zulu problems in the ascendant in 1888, on January 23rd in which year Baden-Powell was appointed aide-de-camp to the general officer commanding at the Cape—his uncle, Lieutenant-General (now Sir) H. A Smyth. Boer encroachments and the rising associated with the names of Dinizulu, Undabuko, and Tshingana created alarm in Natal, and Lord Salisbury's Government was compelled to take action. Dinizulu, who seems to have been something of a victim of circumstances, was aided and abetted by "white men." The insurrection was put down after considerable delay, and the chiefs were captured and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Baden-Powell acted as intelligence officer with the British forces during the protracted and very trying operations conducted by his uncle, and his invaluable services were recognised in the official despatches. In June he was given the additional appointment of assistant military secretary to Lieutenant-General Smyth. He held the dual office of A.M.S. and A.D.C. from

June 21, 1888, till January 15, 1890. In 1888 came his first book, a series of lectures entitled, "Cavalry Instructions." *

On May 2, 1889, Sir Hercules Robinson (afterwards Lord Rosmead) left the Cape for England, and he having resigned the position he had so long held as Governor and High Commissioner, Lieutenant-General Smyth was appointed administrator for the time being, holding the post till the arrival in December of Sir Henry (Lord) Loch.

Towards the close of 1889 Sir Francis De Winton was sent out to confer with Joubert and De Smidt on the condition of affairs in Swaziland; and in a secretarial capacity Baden-Powell not only did useful work during this conference, but he must have added considerably to his knowledge of the views and aspirations of the Boers. It was in 1889 that his racy guide to the sport of pig-sticking was issued.

When, at the beginning of 1890, Lieutenant-General Smyth proceeded to Malta to succeed the late Sir Henry Torrens as Governor and Commander-in-Chief, his nephew went with him as A.M.S. and A.D.C., and remained at Valetta till April, 1893. Soon after his appointment considerable interest was aroused by the Papal mission of Sir Lintorn Simmons relative to the "mixed marriages" question; and around this problem and that of the Constitution,

* Harrison.

perhaps, apart from purely military matters, chiefest interest centred at Valetta during "B.-P.'s" three years' sojourn there. Till February, 1893, the Governor was President of the Council.

Baden-Powell, who was given his majority on July 1, 1892, was much struck by the want of provision made in the island to relieve the dull life of the ordinary soldier. He did not forget the claims of the "Handy Man." With characteristic enthusiasm he threw himself into the congenial work of promoting concerts, theatrical performances, and other amusements for the benefit of the men. And here let it be remarked in parenthesis that "B.-P.'s" opinion of Mr. Thomas Atkins is not one at which any friend of the British private can find cause to cavil. "Tommy Atkins," he writes, in a prefatory note to his "Aids to Scouting," "is not the childish boy that the British public are too apt to think him, to be ignored in peace and petted in war. He is, on the contrary, a man who reads and thinks for himself, and he is keen on any instruction in really practical soldiering, especially if it promises a spice of that dash and adventure which is so dear to a Briton." And amongst the men "B.-P." is as popular as an instructor as in almost any other of his numerous characters. One may be sure, when "B.-P." has given his advice on any subject, that it is advice born of individual experience as well as

of that "inductive reasoning" which was, to paraphrase slightly his own words, learned at his mother's knee. His friendship for the private soldier, it may here be noted, took another practical form. Several of the most attractive of the posters in connection with the Royal Military Tournament were designed by him.

But to return to Malta, and "B.-P.'s" untiring devotion to the recreative exercises of the garrison. "Over and over again," writes Mr. Begbie, "did he ask to be excused from dining at the Verdala Palace, because the hour clashed with his engagements in the reading rooms and the gymnasium. It was in the gymnasium that the theatricals took place, and the large building during these performances presented a really astonishing sight. The floor, of course, was crowded. In the front were the stately chairs from the Palace for the Governor and his staff, and from these to the end of the building, tight as sardines, were packed large numbers of soldiers and a few sailors—a few sailors, because the Handy Man preferred to see his favourite from the rafters, where he sat shoulder to shoulder, almost as closely packed as the people below. The cheer set up by this splendid audience when 'B.-P.' appeared was, even without the crowd on the rafters, enough to bring down the house."

And "B.-P." could not only sacrifice stately

dinners in a historic palace in such a ca
one occasion, when the time came for the
ance of a particular piece, it found him do
the fever. He got out of bed, went thro
performance, and then back to bed again.
said my informant, "is the kind of man
Powell is, you know."

There are some amusing anecdotes of "B.-
life at Malta. Thus we are told that he was
present at an entertainment at which a young l
gave an exposition of skirt-dancing. Everybody wa
delighted at the performer's agility, and the fair *danseuse* was urged to repeat the display. The persuasion produced by cheers failing to achieve its object, the General turned to Baden-Powell and said, "You ask her." For once in a way the versatile officer was at fault. The lady simply would not consent to repeat her performance. "I really couldn't," she said, with a slight lisp and in a somewhat affected manner. "You see, I am almost breathless now." So "B.-P.," having exhausted his powers of persuasion, went back to the Governor. "What does she say, Major? Will she oblige again?" he was asked. "She says, sir," replied Baden-Powell, "she says she'll be *blowed* if she does!" Our *beau sabreur* can thus be severe as well as witty at times at the expense of the fair. He has even been known to "drop into" the

lighter forms of verse. Here is an example attributed to him:—

> I ne'er shall forget her,
> That girl of Valetta.
> The first time I met her
> I thought she was prime.
> But I managed to get a
> Peep through her faldetta,*
> And thought that I'd better
> Get out while I'd time.

In 1890 Baden-Powell published a little work entitled "Vedette," and a tiny but fascinating book on "Reconnaissance and Scouting," which soon ran into a second edition. In the latter work he wrote: "Success in modern warfare depends on accurate knowledge of the enemy and of the country in which the war is carried on. . . . The brain and strong arm, the general and his troops, are helpless unless the scouts explain where, when, and how to strike or to ward off attack." The book, which is illustrated by some admirable sketch maps by "B.-P.," comprises the notes, revised and augmented, of courses of instruction conducted by him in India.

When Baden-Powell left Malta in 1893 he had, it is tolerably certain, become pretty thoroughly acquainted with the romantic military history of

* The hood and shawl worn by Maltese women.

the island and of the heroic Knights of St. John who raised its massive fortifications. "The flower of the world," as the Maltese call their island home, is a place that is sacred in the history of memorable sieges.

In 1894 Baden-Powell was in England, and attended the military manœuvres in Berkshire. Another story of his stoical indifference to pain is told *apropos* of these manœuvres. "B.-P.," who was Brigade-Major, made his appearance in the field carrying his right arm in a sling and his hand in a loose black cashmere binding. He had been bitten by a dog, and was undergoing treatment to prevent possible hydrophobia. "Part of the 'cure' was that so many times a day the hand should be held in boiling water. 'B.-P.' procured a spirit lamp and a small white-enamelled saucepan, in which, whilst it was held over the spirit lamp, he parboiled his hand the requisite number of times a day. He rode with the others for the twenty-one days of the manœuvres, and never excused himself a single duty. Being ambidextrous he was enabled to write his reports every evening, and his narratives were models of what such documents should be, beautifully illustrated with maps and sketches."

Baden-Powell was now approaching the "time limit" at which majors, unless specially nominated for a command, have to take a retiring allowance.

There seemed no chance of his getting a "step" in his regiment, and the outlook was none too full of hope for an officer so devoted to the service as was "B.-P." But trouble was brewing rapidly in Ashanti. French influence had been at work there in 1894; and owing to British refusals (as in the cases of Swaziland, Bechuanaland, and Fiji, to mention three well-known instances) to take certain friendly tribes under protection and to protect others whom we were under an obligation to protect, our prestige had fallen to zero. The bloodthirsty Prempeh grew insolent, and it was decided in November to send an expedition against that dusky potentate. The command was given to Sir Francis Scott, and Baden-Powell was amongst the first to be selected for special service with him.

CHAPTER VI

Organising a native levy at Cape Coast Castle—A chance meeting in an African swamp—Through the Adansi forest—Prempeh's downfall—Promotion—Again gazetted for special service.

THE story of British relations with Ashanti forms an interesting and an instructive, if a not altogether satisfactory chapter in our colonial history. Our first conflict with the natives involved a remarkable object-lesson in the utility of scouting or rather of the fateful folly of faulty reconnaissance. It was during their conquest of the Fantis (1807–1826) that the Ashanti tribes came into collision with the British. They were finally driven from the coast, but not before a terrible disaster had been inflicted upon us. In 1823–4 the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Charles Macarthy, crossed the Prah with a force of some five hundred natives and a few European officers. He fell into an ambush, his ammunition became exhausted—it was reported that some of his kegs of "gunpowder"

contained only vermicelli!—and very few of the force survived to tell the tale. The Governor's skull, rimmed with gold, was for something like half a century the drinking-cup of the kings of Kumassi.

Since 1823 troubles with the tribes have been continuous, the most important offensive operations on our part prior to 1895 being those conducted in 1873–4 by Sir Garnet Wolseley, the present Commander-in-Chief, whose rapid retreat to the coast when the rainy season came on discounted considerably the good effect of his success at Kumassi.

Sir Francis Scott did not make the characteristically English mistake of under-estimating the strength of the enemy; and so swiftly were the operations carried out that no time was given for preparations on the part of the Ashanti kinglet, and passive submission was the result. To Baden-Powell's masterly organisation of the native levy no little of the success of the expedition was due. This levy was formed of about five hundred native warriors, and it was sent ahead as the covering front of the expedition proper. Baden-Powell was assisted by Captain Graham, D.S.O., in the work of getting the men together.

Here is "B.-P.'s" graphic description of the manner in which the levy was mustered after three days of alternate cajoling and threatening the vari-

ous "kings and chiefs" to undertake to produce five hundred men on December 16th, by noon:—"Cape Coast Castle, December 16th, noon:—The parade ground outside the castle lies an arid desert in the midday sun, and the sea breeze wanders where it listeth. Not a man is there. It is a matter then for a hammock ride through the slums of the slum that forms the town. Kings are forked out of the hovels where they are lodging, at the end of a stick; they in their turn rouse out their captains, and by two o'clock the army is assembled. Then it is a sight for the gods to see 'the Sutler' [Captain Graham] putting each man in his place. The stupid inertness of the puzzled negro is duller than that of an ox; a dog would grasp your meaning in one-half the time. Men and brothers! They may be brothers, but they certainly are not men."

Let not the reader run away with any mistaken idea, derived from the foregoing remarks, as to "B.-P.'s" treatment of the levy. Let him read "The Downfall of Prempeh"* first. But to resume our quotation: "If," writes Baden-Powell, "it were not for the depressing heat and the urgency of the work, one could sit down and laugh to tears at the absurdity of the thing, but under the circumstances it is a little 'wearing.' But our motto is the old West Coast proverb, 'Softly, softly, catchee

* Methuen. 1896.

monkey'; in other words, 'Don't flurry; patience gains the day.' It was in joke suggested as a maxim for our levy of softly-sneaking scouts, but we came to adopt it as our guiding principle, and I do not believe that a man acting on any other principle could organise a native levy on the West Coast—and live.

"Gradually out of chaos order comes. Kings and chiefs are installed as officers, and the men are roughly divided into companies under their orders. Then the uniform is issued. This consists of nothing more than a red fez for each man, but it gives as much satisfaction to the naked warrior as does his first tunic to the young hussar.

"Arms are to be issued to the corps at Prahsu, and that the intervening seventy miles may not be traversed uselessly each man is now supplied with a commissariat load to carry on his head. At three o'clock the levy is ready for the march.

"His Excellency the Governor inspects the ranks and says a few encouraging words to the leading chiefs and captains. Among the men we muster a few with drums and others who are artists on the horn. The horn in this case consists of a hollowed elephant's tusk, garnished with many human jaw-bones—its notes are never more than two, and those of doleful tone; but at the signal for the march these horns give out a raucous din which, deepened

by the rumble of the elephant-hide drums, imparts a martial ardour to the men, and soon the jabbering, laughing mob goes shambling through the streets, bound for the bush beyond."

Then follows an impressive picture of the five days' march to Prahsu through wondrously beautiful but unspeakably aromatic forest. "The rule here seems to be, the prettier the spot, the more deadly is its air." At least one expedition has been thwarted by sickness. As Baden-Powell says, Sir Francis Scott had not merely one, but two enemies opposed to him. One was King Prempeh, the other and more formidable being King Fever. On the way to Prahsu are met the commissariat carriers, a "mass of usually blundering natives working just like clockwork" within three days of organisation. The head men of the villages are interviewed with an eye to the needs of the oncoming troops. A.S.C. and Engineer officers are seen hard at work from dawn to dusk, at the construction of rest-camps, stores, telegraph, and bridges.

"Here and there along the road we come to bridges over streams and causeways over swamps all in course of construction at the hands of scores of natives, working with an amount of energy that is most surprising when one sees how few and far between are the ever-travelling hard-worked white superintendents. Here we meet one gaunt and

yellow. Surely we have seen that eye and brow before, although the beard and solar topee do much to disguise the man. His necktie of faded 'Old Carthusian' colours makes suspicion a certainty, and once again old schoolfellows are flung together for an hour to talk in an African swamp of old times on English playing fields." But there is little time for talk, and again the levy presses on "through the never-ending dark green aisles," and so to the advanced base on the river Prah.

Of the little band of eight white men preparing matters in Prahsu, "B.-P." found three down with fever. "Still they peg away, one day down, the next up and smiling again—but sometimes the smile is a little wan. All that buoys them up is hope—hope that through their 'bucking up' their side will win the game."

And beyond the Prah—what then? The reader who has not made himself acquainted with "B.-P.'s" book, and is otherwise ignorant of the country and its customs, can have little idea of the work ahead of the native levy.

Between Prahsu and the actual Ashanti border lie miles of dense forest culminating in the Adansi hills, 1,500 feet above sea level. The route had to be dotted with a chain of defensive camps so as to preserve the lines of communications. The Ashantis' plan of campaign "is to secretly cut a path for

themselves through the bush away from the line of the main road, but parallel to it. When their scouts have warned them that they have well passed the main force or depôt whose destruction they desire, they cut their way to the road and then lie in ambush for parties endeavouring to pass up or down, or they make a raid on a convoy in camp; thus with a comparatively small body they are enabled to completely cut off their enemy from his base." With the aid of about one hundred and fifty of the Houssa police (drawn from the fighting Mohammedan tribes of the Hinterland), the leader of the native levy proceeds to take precautionary steps against the tactics of the Ashantis.

"B.-P." speaks highly of the Adansis who formed his advanced outposts—born bushmen who delighted in work giving them a chance of avenging the oppression of the men of Kumassi. With "B.-P." too, were a company of Elminas under the veteran chief, Ando. Ando, to whom "B.-P." dedicates his book, was a fine old warrior who wore on his breast the Ashanti medal of 1873–4, when he served first in Sir Evelyn Wood's native levy, and then as native adviser on the staff of Lord Wolseley.

Remembering the description of the men recruited at Cape Coast Castle, the reader can well imagine the difficulties encountered by "B.-P." and Captain Graham north of Prahsu. If not, then are they

duly chronicled in "The Downfall of Prempeh." In the midst of it all "B.-P." finds time to forward some excellent despatches to the London *Daily Chronicle,* and admirable sketches to the *Graphic* and its bright little daily namesake.

Meanwhile the chiefs and captains of some eight thousand Ashanti warriors armed with guns and rifles are taking "fetish" (or oath) for war "in the leisurely fashion peculiar to all business, however urgent, in this part of the world." Lord Wolseley, in a noteworthy disquisition on "The Negro as Soldier," * describes the simple and effective way in which courage is inculcated in the Ashantis. The passage discloses the origin of some lines which "B.-P." is said to be fond of quoting: "The Ashanti knows that if he disobeys the orders of his superiors he will be immediately put to death; the Fanti knows that he can run away with impunity. If in the battle the Ashanti turns to fly, there are men on the look-out close behind him who have positive orders to kill him without any quarter. If these men in the second line fail to do their duty in this respect, their superiors again in the third line, whom I may call the subaltern officers, will kill both them and the runaway coward. There are several lines of several grades behind the front fighting lines, each having a similar preventive duty imposed upon it, until the

* *Fortnightly Review*, December 1888.

general commanding is reached. If he fails, if he is defeated, he answers for his failure with his head when he returns to Kumassi. . . . The refrain of the Ashanti war song, which they sang together in a shouting voice when going into action, was:—

> "'If I go forward I die,
> If I go backward I die;
> Better go forward and die.'"

At the foot of the Adansi mountains "B.-P." and his advanced party meet the "good, cheery-looking bush warriors" who are to act as scouts. I cannot resist the temptation to quote the description of his palaver with these "fine, wild children of the bush": "How they enjoy the palaver in which," writes "B.-P.," "I tell them that 'they are the eyes to the body of the snake which is crawling up the bush path from the coast and coiling for its spring! The eyes are hungry, but they will soon have meat; and the main body of white men, armed with the best of weapons, will help them win the day, and get their country back again, to enjoy in peace for ever.'"

On January 4th, 1896, an urgent message was received from the King of Bekwai—a place near Amoaful—seeking British protection. "B.-P." headed a flying column, and after a weird night march was received by the King in council, and on

the following day hoisted the British colours at Bekwai amidst much ceremony.

As is well known, the Ashanti capital was occupied without opposition. Many officers had, despite fever attacks, succeeded in getting to the front full of service zeal, only to meet with disappointment. On "B.-P." and his native levy the pioneering had fallen heavily; and now they had to be on the alert against treachery, and to see that Prempeh and the queen-mother made no successful attempt at escaping. At this point of the narrative "B.-P." writes: "The queen-mother looked a good-natured, smiling little woman; but beneath that smile she is said, like others of her sex, to hide a store of villainy." "Like others of her sex"—oh, "B.P.!" But at the moment he wrote the leader of the levy, with his brother officers, was smarting under a bitter sense of disappointment. A long and toilsome march had ended in a scene of meanness and squalor. By and by when the moment of Prempeh's "downfall" came and he was "bowing himself to the earth for mercy, as doubtless many and many a victim to his lust for blood had bowed in vain to him, and around him were his ministers on their feet clamouring for delay and reconsideration of the case," the "only 'man' among them was the queen."

Governor Maxwell's *coup* in arresting Prempeh, the queen, and the chiefs had not been anticipated,

or there would have been fighting after all. The removal alive of the prisoners was a matter of supreme difficulty, but after some arduous reconnoitring within the neighbourhood of the Ashanti capital the task was accomplished under the most gloomy conditions, the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg having proved the last straw to a load of accumulated disappointments.

As long as Prempeh was in Kumassi or in Ashanti territory a constant watch had to be kept lest his rescue or his assassination should be attempted by his people, upon whom his arrest cast an irremediable stigma of disgrace. Then in the Bekwai and Adansi countries his life might have been attempted from feelings of revenge. But the journey to the coast was accomplished—a journey of 145 miles—in seven days, and the captives were safely embarked for Elmina Fort.

From Kumassi "B.-P." brought Prempeh's hat—he has always had a fancy for hats, and is said to have nourished an ambition to secure President Kruger's. He also secured the great execution bowl and stand used in the sacrificial rites which he has dealt with so fully in his book. The huge receptacle of blood-corroded brass, decorated on the rim with gold ornamentation, is of great antiquity.

Baden-Powell's tributes to the pluck of the British soldiers, more especially on the return march, and to

the adaptiveness of the native levy are well worth reading. These tributes came from the heart; and they move the heart. Despite the thoroughness of the preparations, medical and other, 50 per cent. of the men and something like 80 per cent. of the officers were attacked by the fever. These few words should convey an idea of the viciousness of the climate. The work begun in November had been carried through, and the troops were back at Cape Coast Castle at the beginning of the following February.

In March, 1896, Major Baden-Powell, who had of course been honourably mentioned in the official despatches of Sir Francis Scott, was awarded the star and a brevet lieutenant-colonelcy. But on the 2nd of May ensuing he was again gazetted for special service in South Africa in connection with the Matabele trouble. The collocation of these dates bespeaks his wonderful energy and the confidence placed in him.

CHAPTER VII

Belfast to Buluwayo—Mafeking in 1896—Causes of the Matabele Rising—Not a "Nigger-hater"—Some close shaves.

WHAT stories have we heard of the doings of venturous Britons in the outskirts of the Empire, and beyond in those wild if beautiful islands of the Pacific that are known even by name to so few! Stories not of the Munchausen or Mandeville or, to be more modern in reference, De Rougemont type merely, in which some strata of verifiable truth may be, but simple, modest stories of pluck and endurance that move the heart of the Briton—who is true Briton—as few things on this earth can. And among these stories that told by Colonel Baden-Powell of the Matabele War of 1896* takes a foremost place, for it is not merely personal but national in its interest and its importance, serious, informative, humorous by turns and graphic as anything short of the actions and scenes it describes can be. It should be studied especially

* "The Matabele Campaign, 1896." Methuen.

by those who regarded the war through the mists of prejudice raised by the Jameson raid.

Amongst Baden-Powell's other characteristics is the habit of keeping a diary; and as his history of the operations in Matabeleland and Mashonaland is based on his diary, which was written under all sorts of conditions, even under fire, it could not well (written as it was by such a man) be anything but vivid and picturesque.

Let us begin at the beginning. We had just left "B.-P." returned from the miasmic, fever-laden Gold Coast, and we find him at Belfast, after a few weeks' interval, under orders to embark at Southampton for South Africa on May 2nd to assist Sir Frederick Carrington in the operations against the rebels. And the tireless soldier comments, "What better invitation could one want?" Then for a few days he lived "in constant dread of being run over or otherwise prevented from going after all." But "fortune favoured me."

The account of the journey from the Cape to Buluwayo is delightful—much more so than was the journey itself to the travellers. Stage one is a rattling ("bumpity") one of three days and two nights in a train to Mafeking. "We don't go fast, and often stop to execute repairs." The town is reached at 6 a.m. on May 22nd:—"'*Into* Mafeking?' Well, there's a little tin (corrugated iron) house and

a goods shed to form the station; hundreds of waggons and mounds of stores covered with tarpaulins, and on beyond a street and market square and low-roofed tin houses. Mafeking is at present the railway terminus. The waggons and the goods are waiting to go north to Matabeleland, but here they're stranded for want of transport, since all the oxen on the road are dying fast from rinderpest." The town is crowded with troops. "B.-P." as chief staff officer makes the acquaintance of the rest of the staff.

How those words "want of transport" get on one's nerves to-day! But we read on and find a good—rather a glowing—word for Mr. Julius Weil, to whom (and to "B.-P." and Lord Edward Cecil) we owe the extra provisioning of Mafeking last autumn.

The journey from Mafeking to Buluwayo, a distance of five hundred and fifty-seven miles, was performed by coach, "a regular Buffalo-Bill-Wild-West-Deadwood affair, hung by huge leather springs," drawn by ten mules. After ten days and nights of switchback travelling, which is compared to yachting in a small vessel in bad weather, Buluwayo is reached on June 3rd; and "B.-P." begins his work. And such work! The transport service over the five hundred and fifty-seven miles of horrible road from Mafeking had to

be organised; also a medical staff and ordnance department. That was, however, but a small section of his duties. Frequent are the references to the strain of close office work; but "B.-P." found it "interesting" all the same.

As during the war now in progress in South Africa similar difficulties to those presented in Matabeleland in 1896 have had to be encountered on a larger scale, it may be interesting to quote Baden-Powell's references to the Colonial view of the Imperial officer. "It is," he writes, "a daily source of wonder to me how the General" [Sir F. Carrington] "manages to handle some of the local officers and men. Of course with the better class it is impossible not to get on well, but there are certain individuals, who to any ordinary Imperial officer would be perfectly 'impossible.' Sir Frederick, however, is round them in a moment, and either coaxes or frightens them into acquiescence as the case demands; but were any general without his personal knowledge of South Africa and its men to attempt to take this motley force in hand I cannot think there would be anything but ructions in a very short space of time. A little tact and give-and-take properly applied reaps a good return from Colonial troops, but the slightest show of domineering or letter-of-the-regulations discipline is apt to turn them crusty or 'impossible.'

"A very good instance of the general feeling that seems to influence the local troops is shown in the following letter which the General has received. (The writer of it leaves it to the discretion of the General where to insert commas and stops):—

"*To Mr. Frederick Carrington, General.*

"SIR Seeing in the papers and news from the North the serous phase that affairs are taking I am willing to raise by your permission a set of Good hard pratical colonials here that have seen service Farmers Sons and Chuck my situation and head them off as a Yeomanry Corps I have been under you Sir in the B.B.P. (Bechuanaland Border Police) and am well acquainted with the Big gun Drill and a Good Shot with the maxim. We will consider it an honour to stand under you Sir but object to eye glasses and kid gloves otherwise

"Yrs to command,

"H. —"

Baden-Powell explains that "eye-glass and kid gloves" stand in the estimation of "H. —" and other honest yeomen of the Colony for "Imperial officer." He continues: "Unfortunately the Colonials have had experience of one class or another of regular officers which has not suited their taste, and his defects get on their nerves and

impress themselves on their minds, and they are very apt to look on such an individual as the type of his kind, and if they afterwards meet with others having different attributes, they merely consider them as exceptions which prove the rule."

Baden-Powell, writing in 1896, accurately hit off the characteristics that make for popularity and efficiency in the officer controlling Colonial forces, and the reader will be able to judge by this time how admirably "B.-P." himself has fulfilled the essentials he desiderates.

"No doubt there are certain types among us, and our training and upbringing in the service are apt to gradually run us in the groove of one type or another. The type which is perhaps most of a red rag to the Colonial is the highly trained officer, bound hand and foot by the rules of modern war, who moves his force on a matured deliberate plan, with all minutiæ correctly prepared beforehand, incapable of change to meet any altered or unforeseen circumstances, and who has a proper contempt for nigger foes and for Colonial allies alike."

Then there is the unduly fussy man. But happily these types—and in 1896 the Colonials in Buluwayo were beginning to realise it—are the exception. "What is now," writes Baden-Powell, "more often met with is the man who calmly smokes yet works as hard and as keenly as the best of them. Quick to

adapt his measures to the country he is in, and ready to adopt some other than the drill-book teachings where they don't apply with his particular foe. Understanding the principle of give-and-take without letting all run slack. The three C's which go to make a commander—coolness, common sense, and courage—are the attributes *par excellence* of the proper and more usual type of the British officer. For be it understood that 'coolness' stands for absence of hurry, pettiness, and indecision; 'common-sense' for tactics, strategy, and all supply arrangements; while 'courage' means the necessary dash and leadership of men."

But to return to the subject of the Matabele campaign. "B.-P." soon places his readers in possession of the facts about the war. They stir one even now. The Jameson raid, which involved the withdrawal of the armed forces from the country, and the compulsory slaughtering of cattle to prevent the spread of the rinderpest (a course which the natives thought was adopted to starve them to death), precipitated matters. Then the rebels were instigated by their priests, who goaded them on with promises of the easy decimation of the whites. Murders of helpless women and little children and worse were early features of the outbreak; and the wonder is not that the operations of the British force of little over

five thousand men took eight months to subdue thirty thousand warriors in a country equal in size to Italy, France, and Spain put together; but that there was not a horrible massacre on a big scale at the outset. The lust for blood on the part of the Matabele outran their discretion; and the murders in the outlying farms acted as the needed warning to the majority of the white settlers. At one place "a bride, just out from the peace and civilization at home, had her happy dream suddenly wrecked by a rush of savages into the farmstead. Her husband was struck down, but she managed to escape to the next farm, some four miles distant, only to find its occupants already fled. Ignorant of the country and of the people, the poor girl gathered together what tinned food she could carry, and, making her way to the river, she made herself a grassy nest among the rocks, where she hoped to escape detection. For a few terrible days and nights she existed there, till the Matabele came upon her tracks and shortly stoned her to death—another added to their tale of over a hundred and fifty victims within a week." The Matabele, who resembled the Ashantis in this respect, provided men whose duty it was to kill any of the natives who desired to make peace with or surrender to the whites.

"It is a far cry from Mashonaland to England," writes Baden-Powell, whilst moved by the reports

of massacres that reached him; "and distance lessens the sharpness of the sympathy, but to men on the spot—men with an especially strong, manly and chivalrous spirit in them, as is the case in this land of pioneers—to them such cases as these appeal in a manner which cannot be realised in dear, drowsy, after-lunch Old England. A man here does not mind carrying his life in his hand—he likes it, and takes an attack on himself as a good bit of sport; but touch a woman or a child, and he is in a blind fury in a moment, and then he is gently advised to be mild, and to offer clemency to the poor benighted heathen, who is his brother after all. And though woman is his first care, and can command his last drop of blood in her defence, woman is the first to assail him on his return, with venomous pen for his brutality."

Baden-Powell, as has before been pointed out, is no regular "nigger-hater." He has met "lots of good friends" among the blacks, especially Zulus, of whom the Matabele are a branch. But, he writes, "however good they may be, they must as a people be ruled with a hand of iron in a velvet glove." Prior to the war of 1896 they took the glove off themselves. As an example of the velvet glove at work witness the charming picture, given in the book to which I have been referring, of the colonel and his Hussars (the 7th Hussars on this

occasion) tending a native woman and native children who had been hit by stray bullets as they were lying hid in the grass.

How did "B.-P." strike those who had to work with him at this time? One has to read much between the lines of his own record to glean anything like a full estimate of the value of his services. Writes Mr. Alexander Davis in the *Navy and Army Illustrated* of March 17, 1900: "The one quality prominent in Baden-Powell, contrasting somewhat with the average officer, is the manner in which he carries out his military duties. Dressed in the plain khaki uniform and slouched hat of South African warfare, there is nothing starched or imposing in his appearance or demeanour. He has neither a poker down his back, padding in his shoulders, nor a forbidding or condescending air in intercourse. He is simply quite natural and generally smiling. In conversation you forget the military man, and only see the shrewd man of the world and courteous gentleman. At the time when many deserved and undeserved sarcasms were uttered against most of the Staff by the civilian population, Baden-Powell—the little that was seen of him in camp—always met with praise. Did he wish something done, or whatever dealings he may have had with the storekeepers, he always arranged matters with the maximum of pleasantness and

the minimum of military stiffness or sense of command." Like Sir Frederick Carrington, "B.-P." knew how to overcome the prejudice of the Colonial against the Imperial officer.

But there was fighting as well as office routine for "B.-P." He was soon in action. Then he was sent to act as guide to Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer, who was to have the direction of operations in the Matopos. After further office labours he had command of the column which defeated Uwini, marched (for a considerable distance on famine rations) through the Somabula Forest, subdued Wedza, and helped to pacify the frontier.

"He was soon in action." And he had two marvellously narrow escapes from being as speedily put out of action. It was in the fight on the Umgusa River on June 6th. Having emptied the magazine of his Colt's repeater, he went on with his revolver: "Presently I came on an open stretch of ground, and about eighty yards before me was a Kaffir with a Martini-Henry. He saw me, and dropped on one knee and drew a steady bead on me. I felt so indignant at this that I rode at him as hard as I could go, calling him every name under the sun. He aimed—for an hour it seemed to me—and it was quite a relief when at last he fired, at about ten yards distance, and still more of a relief when I realised he had clean missed me. Then he

jumped up and turned to run, but he had not gone two paces when he cringed as if some one had slapped him hard on the back, then his head dropped and his heels flew up, and he fell on his face, shot by one of our men behind me."

Shortly afterwards Baden-Powell "had taken up a position under a tree when something moving over my head caught my attention. It was a gun-barrel taking aim down at me, the firer jammed so close to the tree-stem as to look like part of it. Before I could move he fired, and just ploughed into the ground at my feet."

In earlier days "B.-P." underwent a course of training in the intricacies of skirt-dancing to enable him to take part in a charity performance. The agility he thus acquired stood him in good stead when scouting. He had ventured too far in a cave and was surprised by a party of natives who thought they had an easy victim. "B.-P.," however, by leaping from boulder to boulder—he wore rubber-soled boots—and moving continuously, succeeded in evading his pursuers.

On another occasion when he was assisting to dislodge the Matabele from their caves in the Matopos he suddenly felt a blow on his thigh, as though some one had struck him with a hammer. "It knocked me down, and I turned round thinking that I must have run against a tree-stump, but none

was there." He had been struck with a lead-cased stone fired from a big-bore gun.

Once a mule, to whose back a loaded carbine had been strapped, passed a bush near Baden-Powell, a twig caught the trigger of the weapon and the bullet nearly found its billet in his body. Another time he had his hat shot off his head—this was at Wedza's stronghold. By acting on a hint supplied by a startled buck he just managed to escape from a party of Matabele who had been stalking the stalker. These are a few instances of their kind out of many. In June he was down with fever and dysentery, but thanks to good doctoring and nursing, he eluded the attacks of disease as he did those of the Matabele.

CHAPTER VIII

"Impeesa" (the wolf)—On the teachings of history—"Nerves"—Night thoughts—A vision of the veldt—An impression of Table Mountain.

THE Matabele often saw Baden-Powell at work by night. He acted as scout because he liked the work; but also because with the exception of the American scouts Burnham and Gielgud, who were his companions for a time, there was no one else who could do it effectively. The friendly natives lacked the necessary pluck and energy; the white scouts, "though keen and plucky as lions," had "never been trained in the necessary intricacies of mapping and reporting."

Baden-Powell was responsible for most of the military maps made of the difficult country and distributed to the officers. He located the rebels so that they were completely surprised and their movements were accurately anticipated. The Matabele called him "Impeesa" (wolf), which his "boy," whom he named "Diamond" because he was "a jewel of a

servant," translated, "The beast that does not sleep, but sneaks about at night."

The value of solitary scouting is dwelt upon by "B.-P." It does not seem (he writes) "to be sufficiently realised among us nowadays. One hears but little of its employment since the Peninsula days, when Marbot gave the English officers unqualified praise for their clever and daring enterprise in this line."

There are a few other scattered references to the subject—a subject uppermost in Baden-Powell's mind during a very large part of the time he is occupied in writing: "It is not only for savage warfare that I venture to think it is so important, but equally for modern civilised tactics." He goes on to give the "reasons why." Then he says elsewhere: "We English have the talent of woodcraft and the spirit of adventure and independence already inborn in our blood to an extent to which no other nationality can lay claim, and therefore among our soldiers we ought to find the best material in the world for scouts. Were we to take this material and rightly train it in that art whose value has been denoted in the term 'half the battle,' we ought to make up in useful men much of our deficiency in numbers."

Again. "It is curious how new-comers fail to appreciate the necessity of precautions until they

have been bitten or nearly bitten, and this they do in spite of all the teachings of history, such as Isandhlwana, the Prince Imperial, Bronker's Spruit, and half-a-hundred narrow shaves that have never become public . . . New-comers . . . think that precautions, to say the least, are derogatory; to see them saunter into danger, is, as it were, to watch a child playing on the edge of a cliff."

What precise effect Baden-Powell's teaching may have had with the authorities is not definable in set terms. But it is worthy of remark here that when in 1899 he was at work on his famous booklet, "Aids to Scouting," steps were being taken to develop the art of reconnaissance in all British and Indian cavalry regiments. It was to aid the work in this direction that "Aids to Scouting" was published. From the time when Alfred, disguised as a harper, found his way into the camp of the Danes, scouting has had a large part to play in all great military operations. The great Duke of Marlborough, as Baden-Powell reminds us, was a good scout himself, and was so impressed with the value of skilled reconnaissance that even when he was a general commanding a large force he frequently went out on his own account as a scout to secretly reconnoitre the enemy's movements. The fact will not have been lost on another student of Marlborough, Lord Wolseley, the present Commander-

in-Chief of the British Army, and Marlborough and Baden-Powell together may have had much to do with the developments pending under Lord Wolseley's auspices in 1899.

Baden-Powell quotes in his "Aids to Scouting" some remarkable instances of important results from the work of even one scout. "Perhaps the most notable was the battle of Sadowa, where a single scout of the German army discovered the whole of the enemy's (Austrian) army in a quite unexpected place. The German army was turned that night into the new direction, and next day a battle was fought which decided the whole campaign. Again in the Franco-German War, 1870, another German scout discovered an Army Corps of the French in an unexpected place, unsupported by other troops. Acting on his information, the Germans were able to surround this force and to destroy it."

In the same booklet he recalls one of his experiences in Matabeleland. "I was," he writes, "riding one day across an open grass plain with one native, scouting. Suddenly we noticed the grass had been recently trodden down. Following up the track for a short distance, it got on to a patch of sandy ground, and we then saw that it was the spoor of several women and boys walking towards some hills about five miles distant, where we believed the

enemy to be hiding. Then we saw a leaf lying about ten yards off the track. There were, we knew, trees of this kind at a village fifteen miles distant, in the direction from which these tracks led.

"Probably, then, these women had come from that village, bringing the leaf with them, and had gone to the hills. On picking up the leaf it was damp and smelled of native beer. So we guessed that, according to the custom of these people, they had been carrying pots of native beer on their heads, the mouths of the pots being stopped with bunches of leaves. One of these leaves had fallen out, but we found it ten yards off the track, which showed at the time it fell a wind had been blowing. There was no wind now, but there had been at about five a.m., and it was now nearly seven.

"So we read from these signs that a party of women had brought beer during the night from the village fifteen miles distant, and had taken it to the enemy on the hills, arriving there about six o'clock. The men would probably start to drink the beer at once (as it goes sour if kept for long), and would, by the time we could get there, be getting sleepy from it, so we should have a favourable chance of reconnoitring their position. We accordingly followed the women's tracks, found the enemy, made our observations, and got away with our information without any difficulty."

General Buller in a recent dispatch wrote, "I suppose our officers will learn the value of scouting in time; but in spite of all one can say, up to this our men seem to blunder into the middle of the enemy and to suffer accordingly." Compare this passage with what Baden-Powell writes in his "Aids." He alludes to the probability of scouting being of even greater value in the future than it has been in the past, "because when acting against enemies armed with long-range weapons and smokeless powders that render his position invisible, we should be exposing our troops to absolute destruction were we to blunder them boldly against an enemy without knowing exactly how and in what strength he was posted."

The risks run by the scout are instanced by the death of the Prince Imperial, to which reference has just been made. The Prince, when out scouting, halted in a bit of hollow ground with crops round it through which the Zulus were able to creep up close without being seen. "To carry out their work successfully the scouts have to undergo continual risks and privations, unostentatiously, and without the applause of their comrades and officers to give them heart." Baden-Powell compares scouting to playing at football, as a pursuit in which you play not for yourself but for your own side. "You," he says to the scout, "are

selected as a forward player. Play the game; play that your side may win. Don't think of your own glorification or your own risks—your side are backing you up."

We can return here to the story of the Matabele war without any sense of having made an unwarranted digression. How vividly "B.-P." brings home to one the terrors that beset men when alone amidst mighty hills or in the veldt travelling through an enemy's country! It takes a man not only full of confidence and thoroughly trained but of iron nerve to make the reliable scout. Towards the close of a long description of a perilous piece of scouting with a patrol (one man having been sent ahead and another left to cover the rear), Baden-Powell writes: "The sun has set and darkness has drawn on before we are well out of the defile; but we are now beyond the rebel outposts, and getting nearer home, so there's nothing much to—bang! phit!—and a bullet flies just over our heads! It came from behind; we halt and hear the clatter of hoofs as the man who was left as rear-guard comes galloping up the road. A moment later he appears in the dusk, rounding the next turn. He no sooner sees us than he halts, dismounts, drops on one knee, takes aim, and fires straight at us. We shout and yell, but as he loads to fire again, we scatter, and push on along the road, and he comes

clattering after us. The explanation is that nervousness, increased by darkness coming on, has sent the man a little off his head, and, ludicrous though it be, it is a little unpleasant for us. None of his comrades cares to tackle him . . . and so we leave him to follow us, keeping a respectful distance. At length the fires twinkle ahead, and tired and hungry, we get back to camp. At dawn our missing man turned up—without his horse—it had dropped dead of fatigue. He had a wondrous tale of how he had pursued a host of enemies. The sole reward he got was a ducking in the spruit"—and that apparently put him right again.

Sometimes men when out by themselves on patrol work get lost. Then it happens occasionally that they lose their heads "and tear off in all directions, until they exhaust themselves and their horses, when they become a prey to the enemy or go out of their mind."

The "night thoughts" of "Impeesa" ranged beyond and through the camps of the enemy; just as we find evidence that the eye of the scout in daytime is also the eye of the artist and the Englishman. "B.-P." has a special fondness for the stars. Here is a little soliloquy as he surveys the firmament one night in camp ere closing his eyes in sleep: "And then you take a last look at the glorious starspangled ceiling overhead, and, until all is blurred

in sleep, you see in the dark mantle above you the veil of ignorance that shrouds the earth from heaven's light beyond—the starry points of brightness that tend to light us are holes made in that covering by the work of good men, whose example and whose teaching encourage us to take our little part in letting in the light in imitation of the greater radiant orb—to lighten up the darkness till the daylight dawns."

Springtime in Selukwe discovers him dreaming of springtime in England, and he calls the wild flowers of the wooded hills by names dear to every dweller in the countryside of the homeland.

September 11, 1896, the twentieth anniversary of the date on which he entered her Majesty's service, found Baden-Powell out in the wilds, by the banks of the Shangani River, with three of the "Colonial born." The occasion suggests reminiscence, and he writes: "Once, not very long ago, at an afternoon 'At Home,' I was handing a cup of tea to an old dowager, who bridled up in a mantle with bugles and beads, and some one noticed that in doing so my face wore an absent look, and I was afterwards asked where my thoughts were at that time. I could only reply that 'my mind was a blank, with a single vision in it, lower half yellow, upper half blue,' in other words, the yellow veldt of South Africa, topped with the blue South African sky.

Possibly the scent of the tea had touched some memory chord which connected it with my black tin billy, steaming among the embers of a wood fire; but whatever it was then my vision is to-day a reality. I am looking out on the yellow veldt and the blue sky; the veldt with its grey, hazy clumps of thorn bush is shimmering in the heat, and its vast expanse is only broken by the gleaming white sand of the river bed and the green reeds and bushes which fringe its banks. . . .

"I used to think that the novelty of the thing would wear off, that these visions of the veldt would fade away as civilised life grew upon me. But they didn't. They come again at most inopportune moments . . . and off goes my mind at a tangent to play with its toys. Oliver Wendell Holmes is only too true when he says that most of us are 'boys all our lives'; we have our toys, and will play with them with as much zest at eighty as at eight, that in their company we can never grow old. I can't help it if my toys take the form of all that has to do with veldt life, and if they remain my toys till I drop—

> "'Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its grey,
> The stars of its winter, the dews of its May;
> And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
> Dear Father, take care of Thy children, the boys.'

"May it not be that our toys are the various media

adapted to individual tastes through which men may know their God?" And then the mind of the man on the veldt takes flight for the moment to the East, and he quotes one of the many curious Indian parallels to Biblical thought.

Passing the glimpses given of "B.-P.'s" fondness for children—how pathetic is that story of the poor little child of three, whose murdered body he buried and one of whose little shoes he kept as a keepsake! —passing the tributes paid to the nursing sisters at Salisbury, and the photographic references to the strange medley of men he met during the war; noting, in passing, the record that where possible Sunday was made a day for divine service and for rest, and the brief but interesting references to the ancient ruins and rock paintings of Mashonaland, we reserve for final quotation from Baden-Powell's remarkable book this fine impression of Table Mountain as he looked upon it when homeward bound:—

"Table Mountain grows grander and more living every time I see him. His personality grows on one like that of the Taj Mahal at Agra. I can quite understand certain races worshipping a mountain as their idea of divinity. Always steadfast and stupendous. You may turn your back on him and wander away for a while; but whenever you choose to look back, he is there the same as ever. You

have only to go back into his shadow to find a haven from the chilling wind or withering sun. And you may climb up to him, to where he sits above the clouds . . . and when you have reached the summit, you can lay you down in peace upon his breast and contemplate the world below which you have left behind."

It is only at rare intervals that Baden-Powell permits himself to depart from the ordinary narrative of wit, humour, tragedy to transcendental things. But he says enough to show where his thoughts often go if his pen cannot or will not follow them.

CHAPTER IX

'Colonel B.-P. and incident of Pretty Girl"—"I am a Nervous Man"—Official recognition of services in Rhodesia—Meerut and Natal—The call to Mafeking.

ON board the *Dunvegan Castle*, which brought back "B.-P." to "England, home, and beauty" at the close of the Matabele war, were many well-known personages. In addition to Sir Frederick Carrington there were Mr. Cecil Rhodes, Miss Rhodes, and Colonel Frank Rhodes, Sir Charles Metcalfe, Mr. and Mrs. Rochfort Maguire, Olive Schreiner and her husband, a host of other notables, and, if report speaks truly, the manuscript of "Trooper Peter Halkett of Mashonaland." "A most interesting shipload."

There was a chiel aboard "taking notes," as well as Baden-Powell, and that chiel has discovered himself recently as "a correspondent of the *Sketch*." It seems that he jotted down in a tiny pocket-book notes after this style :—

> Col. B.-P. and incident
> of the Pretty Girl. Very
> funny.

A few days later—

> Sports yesterday. Beat Col. B.-P. final for cock-fight. Glorious victory!

Again—

> Concert last night splendid. Musical sketch by Col. B.-P. A1.

Apropos of the first of the foregoing entries, it appears the Colonel had by chance left the book he had been reading—Selous' "Sunshine and Storm in Rhodesia," quite a new book then—in the ladies' saloon. The *Sketch* contributor writes: "I think it was the only copy we had on board, and therefore much sought after. On going to look for it later in the day, it had disappeared. The Colonel was annoyed, but, after asking a few of the passengers, especially the ladies, if they had seen it, apparently took no further notice of the matter. The following morning, to our great amusement, a notice was found pinned on to the green-baize board outside the saloon. It was a sheet of notepaper. On one side was a pen-and-ink sketch of a sweetly pretty girl reading a book, and on the opposite page a ghastly being in petticoats! On the first page, underneath the pretty girl, was written: 'Is the lady'—(I don't know how he found out it *was* a lady!)—'who has stolen Colonel Baking-Powder's

book like this?' And on the next page, underneath the atrocity, 'Or like this?' Needless to say, the book was returned, and the following morning appeared a sketch of the pretty girl with an outrageous caricature of the Colonel kneeling at her feet, entitled, 'Colonel Baking-Powder returning thanks for the recovery of his book!'"

The Colonel had a curious way of making his B's and P's, and this gave the artist away. Later, one of the fair passengers was heard to say to him, alluding to the sketches, "I thought they were very, very rude; and not a bit like you, either, were they?" The Colonel's reply is not on record.

As to the third entry in the note-book, the writer happened to be one of the concert committee, and so approached "B.-P." to extract the promise of an item for the programme: "Knowing of the Colonel's reputation as an entertainer, I hastened to him first of all. I remember he was sitting at a little table, surrounded with maps, sketches, and plans, and reams of foolscap—the foundation, as I learnt after, of his book on the Matabele campaign. 'Oh, yes!' he said; 'put me down for a musical sketch. Eh? Title? Oh, I don't know anything about the title yet!' So I had to be content, and, after all, it was a good start—'Colonel Baden-Powell, Musical Sketch.'

"The following night came the concert. Packed

house; all local celebrities, &c. Colonel Baden-Powell appeared in the second half of the programme. I happened to be sitting near him at the interval, and asked him if he had thought of a title for his sketch. 'Oh, I haven't the remotest idea what it's going to be about even!' he replied, laughing. 'But it will come presently.' It did. The next turn was a song entitled 'I am a Nervous Man.' I don't think the song was funny—in fact, I have not the remotest idea what it was about; but I do remember yelling ferociously for an encore, in order to give the Colonel—as a committee-man, my trump-card—a chance to think of his sketch. But it was no use, the encore was not forthcoming, and the would-be funny man retired. 'Next item on programme, Colonel Baden-Powell.' A roar of applause (he always was popular), and the Colonel quietly rose and walked to the piano.

"'Ladies and gentlemen,' he said, 'I see here on the programme, "Colonel Baden-Powell, Musical Sketch," but no title. This I regret I have been unable to supply before; but, to tell you the truth—er—I have only just thought of it! With the permission of the artist who has just preceded me, the title of my sketch will be "I am a Nervous Man!"' And for twenty minutes, with songs, imitations, stories, &c., the man who is now world-famed as the Defender of Mafeking kept that saloon, packed

full of first-, second-, and third-class passengers, in one continual roar of laughter and applause."

The story takes one back to old Godalming days.

A day or two before the close of January, 1897, Jubilee Year, Sir Frederick Carrington and Colonel Baden-Powell arrived home in the midst of a trying winter. The latter's special commission expired on January 23rd. On March 9th, the *London Gazette* published the official despatches of the Matabele campaign. In a despatch dated Umtali, December 12, 1896 (in which it is worth noticing at the present juncture grateful allusion is made to the facility afforded to the Imperial troops in passing through Portuguese territory to Mashonaland), Sir Frederick observes that "owing to the dearth of trained special service officers" the work had fallen heavily at first on the officers of the Staff, and adds, "indeed, for all ranks the campaign was an arduous one." There is a long list of names of men who distinguished themselves, and the following entry is made under the heading of "Staff":—"Major and Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel Baden-Powell, 13th Hussars, Chief Staff Officer. As Chief of the Staff his services were invaluable, and I cannot speak too highly of the assistance he has rendered me. Commanded the advanced force during the whole of its attack on Babyan's stronghold, 20th July. Performed excellent service in the risky work of locating the

various impis in the Matopos by day and by night. Commanded successful patrols in clearing the Shangani, Wedza's, and Belingwe districts. Acted as Staff officer to Colonel Plumer throughout the operations in the Matopos." Lieutenant Prince Alexander of Teck, who acted as Staff Officer to Colonel Baden-Powell's patrol to Wedza's (and to whose services "B.-P." pays generous tribute in his book) is mentioned officially as having proved indefatigable and "particularly useful in the attack on Wedza's stronghold."

Sir Frederick Carrington, who in March went to Gibraltar to take command of the Infantry Brigade there, was, in the Honours Gazette of May 7th, awarded a K.C.B., "in recognition of his services in South Africa in 1896." At the same time, Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel Baden-Powell, who had on April 30th been gazetted to the lieutenant-colonelcy of the 5th Dragoon Guards *vice* Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell Bowers (who had completed his tenure), was awarded a brevet-colonelcy in that regiment, which was then at Meerut. His friends might have expected something more than this for "B.-P." And one wonders if the court-martial on Uwini, in regard to which Sir Frederick Carrington seems practically and properly to have set aside the instructions of the High Commissioner,* had raised

* See "The Matabele Campaign," pp. 287–301, 344.

any prejudice against Baden-Powell at headquarters —prejudice which may have been accentuated by the public temper aroused by the Raid inquiry. Baden-Powell never had much public attention concentrated upon him until the present moment. Indeed, the same might be said of the operations in which he had up to the close of 1899 been prominently engaged. During the Zulu trouble of 1888, Zanzibar and the Parnell Commission largely arrested popular attention. Whilst the Ashanti Expedition was doing its splendid work under the leadership of Sir Francis Scott, England could think of little but Armenia, Venezuela, Chitral, or Mr. Gladstone's retirement. Then, in 1896, the Soudan campaign quite dwarfed the operations in Rhodesia to the public eye.

However, in the North-West Provinces, and later in Natal, Baden-Powell found useful work awaiting him, and did it. And he was on the eve of being promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, when some one was wanted for "extra regimental employ" in South Africa. That "extra regimental employ" was not one that a lieutenant-general is usually asked to undertake. It was offered him, and he, readily and characteristically relinquishing the pending promotion in rank, was soon on his way —in July, 1899—to the veldt he loved and the fame that has come to him as "the Hero of Mafeking."

CHAPTER X

On the eve of war—Military resources—Forestalling an economical Government—Some of "B.-P.'s" colleagues—Mafeking in 1899—A band of brave women.

1900 HAS witnessed Colonel Baden-Powell, his old commander, Sir Frederick Carrington, and his old comrade-in-arms, Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer, again in the land of veldt and koppie. But in what different circumstances from those existing in 1896! The eyes of the world have now been concentrated on their doings as on those of the armies carrying on, it is to be hoped to definite issue, a war the beginning of which may be said to have appeared like a small cloud on the political horizon more than two centuries ago. And wherever the spirit of chivalry yet lives, under whatever flag, one may be certain a prayer has gone up on behalf of the man into whose charge was given the defence of Mafeking.

Concisely stated, the duty allotted to Colonel Baden-Powell in July, 1899, was to organise in the

Bechuanaland Protectorate a force of Irregulars which should serve to prevent any native rising and in the event of war to protect the whole of the western border of the Protectorate and the southern border of Rhodesia from invasion, and thereby, in addition to affording protection to the settlers, preserve communication between Buluwayo and the south. He proceeded to form what is known as the Protectorate Regiment; and acting under him Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer organised the Rhodesia Regiment. On their part the Boers began massing in the Waterberg and Zoutpansberg districts and planted outposts at the various drifts facing a handful of men belonging to the Bechuanaland Border Police, who were scattered along some 200 miles of the Crocodile River. Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer's actual fighting force in October last totalled some thousand men, divided under separate commands, as, for example, those of Major Pilson, Captain MacLaren, and Lieutentant-Colonel Spreckley. By general consent Mafeking was selected as the centre of Colonel Baden-Powell's preparations.

Accurate information is lacking as to the strength of the garrison in Mafeking; but there is reason to believe that it comprised less than a thousand fighting men. Normally the civilian population is between two and three thousand, but this number had dwindled to about one thousand before hostilities

commenced. The natives are believed to have numbered seven thousand. As many civilians as possible were then formed into a Town Guard. The ordnance comprised two muzzle-loading 7-pounders and a few machine guns. Later an antique 16-pound ship cannon, supposed to have been made in 1770 or 1815, and originally in the possession of some Germans who sold it to the chief of the Baralongs, was unearthed in the native stadt (or kraal) and pressed into the service of the defence. This ancient piece of metal singularly enough bore upon it the letters "B. P." Weighing rather less than half a ton the weapon, despite its age, was found capable of throwing a 10-pound projectile a distance of two thousand yards with a 2-pound charge of powder. "B.-P." named the gun "Lord Nelson." Then, though the resources for such work must have been scanty in the extreme, another cannon, called the "Wolf," was cast and ammunition for it was manufactured in the little town. This weapon is described as a 5-inch gun capable of throwing a 25-pound dynamite shell. Its construction is attributed primarily to "B.-P." and Major Panzera.

To Colonel Baden-Powell's Staff was appointed as its chief Major Lord Edward Cecil, Grenadier Guards, the Premier's fourth son. Lord Edward, whose soldierly instincts have been hampered to some degree by a none too robust constitution, won

a D.S.O. when serving under Lord Kitchener in the Soudan. With Baden-Powell he shared the responsibility of purchasing supplies for Mafeking far in excess of those deemed sufficient by an economical Government. Fortunately for the town the two officers were aided in their patriotic enterprise by the firm of Julius Weil & Co., who are the "universal providers" in that part of South Africa, and without whose co-operation it seems not improbable that much of the commandant's energy and foresight in the work of provisioning the town would have been useless.

Among other officers in Mafeking were many well-known and experienced soldiers, including Colonel Hore (commanding the Diamond Fields Horse), Colonel Goold Adams, Colonel Walford (British South Africa Police), Lieutenant Lord Charles Cavendish-Bentinck (9th Lancers), Major Baillie, Major F. W. Panzera (an engineer officer who was in Rhodesia in 1893), Major Courtenay Vyvyan (of the 2nd Buffs and a companion of "B.-P." in 1896), Major Godley, Surgeon-Major Anderson (Royal Army Medical Service), Captain Gordon Wilson, A.D.C. (of the "Blues," who as an Eton lad achieved fame by dashing forward and felling a lunatic who attempted, or was believed to be about to attempt, to assassinate the Queen at Windsor), Captain H. C. Sandford (Indian Staff

Corps), Captain R. J. Vernon (King's Royal Rifle Corps), Captain Randolph C. Nesbitt, V.C. (British South Africa Police, who won his V.C. in Mashonaland), Captain Charles FitzClarence (1st Royal Fusiliers), Captain Williams (British South Africa Police), Captain Cowan (Bechuanaland Rifles), Captain the Hon. D. H. Marsham (Imperial Light Horse, an old Carthusian), Captain C. A. K. Pechell (3rd King's Royal Rifles), Lieutenant Brady, Lieutenant Daniels, Lieutenant Dunlop-Smith (Army Veterinary Department), Lieutenant Hallowell, Lieutenant Holden (Derbyshire Yeomanry), Lieutenant Murray (Cape Police), Lieutenant Murchison, Lieutenant Paton, Lieutenant H. T. C. Singleton, Lieutenant Hanbury Tracey, and Lieutenant S. Winburne.

Baden-Powell's description of Mafeking in 1896 has been quoted. The little town has increased considerably in importance if not in architectural beauty since that date, particularly as a centre controlling trade with the Protectorate and the Transvaal. The railway from the Cape, of which it was in 1896 the terminus, has been carried far away north to Buluwayo. For all its pagoda-like market-hall and one or two other prominent buildings (masonic temple, hotels, English, Dutch, and Wesleyan churches, the post-office—which is also the court-house, &c.), it is just for all the world

like a big store of zinc-roofed and often mud-walled houses, built "promiscuous like" on the open veldt. Situated 870 miles from Cape Town, 150 miles from Pretoria, eight miles from the Transvaal border on the east and about twenty miles from Pitsani (Dr. Jameson's "jumping-off" place) on the north-west, it is watered by the river Molopo and a stream called the Ramathlabama. It has a cricket-ground, a racecourse, and is the headquarters of the Bechuanaland Border Police. It is periodically subject to dust-storms the horrors of which have to be experienced to be believed in.

As Mafeking was originally laid out at the time of the Warren expedition in 1885 more or less in accordance with military ideas, a good description of it by a military man should enable the reader the more readily to grasp the difficulties Colonel Baden-Powell has had to encounter in defending it. Such a description—one of the most graphic yet written—has been supplied to the *Morning Post* by Major Baillie. "The town," writes Major Baillie, "is situated on a rise about three hundred yards north of the Molopo, which flows from east to west. It is about three-quarters of a mile square. The railroad runs to the west of the town, due north and south; but immediately south, where it crosses the Molopo by an iron bridge, it inclines rather westward for a distance of two or three miles. The

railway embankment north and south of the river thus furnishes cover. From the east and south-east there are heights on the southern bank of the Molopo. To the west again of the railway, and nearly abutting it half a mile south of the Molopo, is the native stadt. It lies on both sides of the river and on the northern bank commences about half a mile from the railway, then runs in a north-westerly direction for about a mile and a half, and ends about a mile and three-quarters west of the railway. The ground in front of the northern end is slightly higher than the stadt, and soon begins to sink away from it, affording good cover to an enemy moving on that side. Near the railway the ground slopes gradually down for a considerable distance to the river. The country round Mafeking to the west, north, and east is flat, but across the Molopo to the south and south-east it commands the town. The ground to the west of the stadt commands the stadt.

"Situated two thousand yards south, and slightly east of the centre of the town, is an old fort of Sir Charles Warren's—Cannon Koppie. This is the key of the position. It is an old circular stone fort, and only by dint of extraordinary exertion had it been possible to bring it up in any degree to a sufficient state of efficiency to enable it to resist even old ordinary 7-pounder guns. It has an in-

terior diameter approximately of twenty-five yards. The native location, occupied by half-breeds, lies directly between Cannon Koppie and the town, on the southern bank of the river. Following the course of the river eastward, about one thousand two hundred yards from the town, and on the northern bank, extend the brickfields (eventually occupied by both parties), while in the same direction and about three miles and a half from Mafeking, on a ridge, is McMellan's Farm, subsequently the Boer headquarters.

"To return to the town. At the north-eastern corner is the convent. Due east of that is the grand stand, about a mile away, while N.N.E. from the convent, and a mile and a half away, is the base of the waterworks, which extend to a trench at their head in the same direction for nearly a mile." As to the extent of the defences, it has been pointed out by another pen than Major Baillie's that Baden-Powell, by deciding at the outset to hold as large an area of ground as was possible, confused the Boer gunners. By the middle of February the line of defences measured about nine miles. Commencing with the convent and working westward at the outset, the defences, as described by Major Baillie, were as follows: The railway line and armoured train protected the north-west front, then nearer to the railway came Fort Victoria, occupied

by Railway Volunteers, and in the arc of a circle extending to the north end of the stadt, trenches were occupied by the Protectorate Regiment. The women's laager was established on the edge of the stadt near the B.S.A.P. officers' quarters. It may be interjected here that this laager, against which the Boers have persistently directed their fire, was contrived by chaining together a number of waggons and rendering them bomb-proof by means of sandbags and stones. Fences of barbed wire and thorns were fixed in such a manner as to afford resistance to possible rushes on the part of the enemy. Covered trenches were made for the safer conveyance of provisions to the occupants. Of the four hundred women and children who here sought shelter one-half were Dutch.

A refuge camp was formed, says Major Baillie, in the hollow north of the stadt, the northern end of which was held by Captain Vernon and C squadron of the Protectorate Regiment; whilst B squadron, under Captain Marsham and the natives held the stadt itself, the whole being under Major Godley, who commanded the western outposts. The town was garrisoned by the Cape Police under Captain Brown and Inspector Marsh. These and the Railway Volunteers were under Colonel Vyvyan, while Cannon Koppie was entrusted to Colonel Walford and the B.S.A.P.

"Colonel Baden-Powell retained one squadron of the Protectorate Regiment as reserve under his own immediate control. After the convent had been practically demolished by shell-fire and the railway-line all round the town pulled up or mined by the Boers" —with consummate ingenuity the commandant designed a circular continuation of the railway on which to run an armoured train [H.M.S. Firefly] —"a small work was erected at the convent corner, garrisoned by the Cape Police and a Maxim under Lieutenant Murray, who was also put in charge of the armoured train, which had been drawn to the railway-station out of harm's way. The Railway Volunteers garrisoned the cemetery and had an advanced trench about eight hundred yards to the front and immediately to the right of the line.

"To the westward came Fort Cardigan, and then again Fort Miller; to the south-west was Major Godley's Fort, at the north of the native stadt, with Fort Ayr, and an advanced fort crowning the town to the northern end of the stadt, and, though rather detached, having command of the view for a great distance. To the south of the northern portion of the stadt the Cape Police were entrenched with a Maxim, and five hundred yards to the west front of Inspector Marsh's post lay Limestone Fort, commanding the valley on the other side of which lay the Boer laager and entrenchments. The whole of the

edge of the stadt was furnished with loopholes and trenches, and was garrisoned by the native inhabitants. Near the railway were situated two armoured trucks with a Nordenfelt; and Cannon Koppie with two Maxims and a 7-pounder lay to the south-east."

A number of other "forts" were constructed as occasion seemed to require, and garrisoned respectively by from fifteen to forty men of the Town Guard. Bomb-proofs were "constructed everywhere, traverses erected at the end of streets, trenches giving cover leading from every portion of the town and defences," so that it was "possible to walk round the town without being exposed to aim fire." Then telephones were "established in all the headquarter bomb-proofs of outlying forts, and connected with the headquarter bomb-proof." Look-out men and boys were stationed at various points of vantage to watch the enemy's guns. As soon as one of these guns was fired the watchers rang a bell, which was a signal to every one near to take shelter in the nearest "bomb-proof."

On the eve of war an effort was made to get all the women and children to a place of safety by rail. Many brave women, however, elected to remain. Of these the nuns and the nursing sisters, though so far nameless, will be ever gratefully remembered. The brave part played by Lady Sarah Wilson, wife of Captain Gordon Wilson, is a matter of common

knowledge. Apart from the innumerable problems presented by the native quarter, the food question, disease, and the relaxation needed even by men and women besieged, it will be gathered from what has already been written that the mere military duties involved in Colonel Baden-Powell's command must have proved more than enough for most men, even of energy and skill, to successfully cope with. And here in England we know but an infinitesimal part of the whole true story of the siege. Of what is known an effort is made in the chapters ensuing to supply a consecutive and succinct narrative.

CHAPTER XI

"B.-P.'s" farewell wish—Kraaipan disaster—Prompt reprisal—Polite letter-writing—"Four hours bombardment: one dog killed"—General Cronje brings up a heavy siege-gun—"A last chance"—The attack on Cannon Koppie.

"I HOPE they will give me a warm corner." In these words, two days before he left England for South Africa, in July, 1899, Colonel Baden-Powell compressed more than a personal wish; he implied, surely, the inevitability, from his point of view, of war. And his point of view was the result, as we have seen, of many years' experience of the Boers and their ways and ambitions. If too much emphasis has not been placed upon his farewell words, he must then be regarded as a true prophet. Anyway his wish has had fulfilment. Mafeking has been perhaps the warmest corner in South Africa during the present campaign, for the heat of Paardeburg or Colenso or Spion Kop was but brief in comparison if more intense.

The Boer ultimatum was handed to Mr. Conyng-

ham Greene, the British representative at Pretoria, on October 9th, and the Transvaal declared war on October 11th. On the latter date Colonel Baden-Powell despatched an armoured train, crowded with women and children, from Mafeking to the south. The train was in charge of Captain Nesbitt, V.C., and fifteen men. Shortly after it had passed Kraaipan, which is about forty miles south of Mafeking, the Boers crossed their border and tore up the line. The journey south, however, was not interrupted, and the refugees gained safety. The gallant Captain had now a more difficult task as he knew (as he did not know, it was an impossible task) to perform. He procured two guns and ammunition to add to the meagre resources of Mafeking, and proceeded on his return journey on October 12th. He succeeded in reaching Maribogo, a few miles south of Kraaipan, and was there warned by the Border Police. Full of the urgency of his mission, however, he decided to do his best to get through, with the result that he played a conspicuous part in the first engagement of the war. The train was blown up, toppled over, and the Captain and his companions, after standing their ground against a heavy fire from two 9-pounders and a large force of the enemy for several hours between midnight and dawn, succumbed only when the Boers brought up some big guns. Captain Nesbitt and several of his men were wounded; and, with the

exception of the engine-driver, who escaped by creeping unobserved along the dry ditch beside the embankment, all were made prisoners.

It would appear that the Boers meant to reduce Mafeking as their initial move in the game, principally because of a belief General Cronje entertained that Dr. Jameson was there. The Boer General had, it is computed, eight thousand burghers with him, and a battery of modern guns. But his early success was soon to receive a check. Noting that an armoured train must now present special temptations to the enemy, Baden-Powell filled two trucks with dynamite, and these being attached to an engine were taken out a few miles, when the driver, on sighting the enemy, uncoupled the engine and steamed back promptly. The Boers opened fire, there was a terrific explosion, and if they did not suffer the heavy loss of life made probable, the shock they received must have had a serious effect on their nerves.

On October 13th telegraphic communication with Rhodesia was cut off, and General Cronje began to make his investment of Mafeking felt by the defenders. On the 14th a patrol, under the command of Lord Charles Cavendish-Bentinck, came into collision with the besiegers, support was sent them, and an action ensued in which an armoured train, constructed by Lieutenant More, and com-

manded by Captain Williams, was again prominent, and the Boers retired to consider matters. The British loss was returned as three killed, fourteen wounded; Boer casualties, fifty-two killed. The same day (Saturday), the Boer commander despatched a note to Colonel Baden-Powell proposing that Sunday should be observed as a peace day, and that the customary usages of civilised warfare should be adhered to. In an equally courteous reply, to the affect that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to adopt the proffered suggestion, Colonel Baden-Powell drew attention to the fact that his ambulances had been fired on. Thus began a memorable interchange of letters between the rival commanders.

On Sunday afternoon a member of General Cronje's staff (a Dr. Pirow) approached Mafeking in a landau "drawn by spanking grey horses and carrying the Red Cross." As the bearer of a message from General Cronje, the envoy was accorded all hospitality, and entertained at luncheon with the staff. His mission was to ascertain particulars as to the firing on the British ambulances, and to assure Colonel Baden-Powell that on conviction such an offence would be visited with capital punishment. Unfortunately for the progress of such good intentions as are here indicated, the offence complained of was repeated soon after Dr. Pirow's visit.

On October 16th the Boers cut off the water supply of the town; but this step had been foreseen. The wells had been cleaned and that sunk by Sir Charles Warren re-opened. General Cronje again resorted to the pen. Would not Colonel Baden-Powell surrender "in order to avoid further bloodshed." The reply came: "Certainly; but when will the bloodshed begin?" So the Boer leader began busily to perfect his investment. He knew the uses of the spade thoroughly; and began to have trenches dug *en echelon*, a means of approaching a fortified position tried by him so successfully at Potchefstroom in 1881. Furthermore, in addition to keeping up a bombardment with five 7-pounders, one 10-pounder, and two Krupp 12-pounders, and a 94-pounder Creusot gun, General Cronje sent to Pretoria for a Krupp 100-pounder.

On the 20th Colonel Hore had a successful brush with a section of the investing forces. Next day (when by the way, Colonel Plumer encountered the Boers near Tuli) there came from Colonel Baden-Powell the historic message: "October 21st. All well. Four hours' bombardment. One dog killed." Bomb-proofs, hitherto regarded with a certain amount of disrespect, now began to be more numerous in the town. The Boer General meant to keep the defenders active. On October 24th the convent, which had been turned into a hospital, was

struck several times. One shell broke through a wall near to a portrait of the Queen without damaging the portrait, and this was taken as a good omen. General Cronje, busy now with gun and spade, was yet unwilling to altogether discard the pen. Hence another message summoning the garrison to surrender. The messenger found Colonel Baden-Powell asleep. The answer was again annoying if humorous: "Tell General Cronje I will let him know when we have had enough." The retort took the form of a thirty-six hours' shell-fire, three hundred shells being sent into the town. There arose eventually a sort of competition between the garrison and the townspeople for possession of such of these trophies as did not explode; and fancy prices ranging from 30s. to £8 were put upon them according to the size of the shell. But this trading in the enemy's shells has a tragic side. While three men were extracting an unfired charge one was killed and his companions severely injured by an explosion. The thirty-six hours' bombardment was followed by a desperate attempt to carry the defences by assault. The attack was a failure; it was repeated the next day with similar result.

General Cronje seems now to have been convinced that the bombardment was the better means to adopt. So he acquainted Colonel Baden-Powell with this view, emphasising in doing so the character

of the siege gun he was about to bring to bear. "B.-P." expressed himself as being very much obliged, and went on to supply information he thought might be interesting to those in the Boer lines. The town, he informed General Cronje, was surrounded by mines, some arranged to explode automatically, some by wire from headquarters. Indeed, the Colonel was most communicative, and with serious reason this time. After pointing out that the gaol was chiefly occupied by General Cronje's countrymen, and that he had put a yellow flag above it so that the Boer gunners could avoid firing on it, he went on to say that if the Boer General persisted in shelling a town full of inoffensive civilians and women, a precedent of an undesirable kind would be afforded for the British forces when they invaded the Transvaal.

On October 27th, as the shelling continued, a night attack on a section of the Boer trenches was planned. Fifty-three men under Captain Fitz-Clarence, supported by two parties of Cape Police under Lieutenant Murray, moved off at eight o'clock, the objective being Commandant Louw's position on the Mafeking side of the racecourse. The squadron (D., of the Protectorate Regiment) was ordered to use cold steel only, while the Police were to enfilade the Boer trenches from the rear. The surprise of the Boers was complete; the con-

fusion into which they were thrown perfect. The trenches, however, were untenable, and when the retirement had been carried out it was found that Captain FitzClarence and Lieutenant S. Winburne had been slightly wounded, as were eleven others; that six had been killed and that two were "missing." Of the hundred men killed on the Boer side, fifty are computed to have been shot by their comrades during the confusion.

Now followed further overtures and the usual sequel in an access of energy on the part of the besiegers. On October 30th General Cronje tendered, under a flag of truce, "a last chance" to Colonel Baden-Powell, who was enjoined to surrender at the eleventh hour. Continuing, the Boer General gave it as his opinion that the Geneva Convention did not allow the Red Cross flag to protect several buildings at once in a town; and pointed out that the emblem was then flying over no less than three distinct buildings in Mafeking, buildings so placed as to render it difficult to fire anywhere and at the same time respect the flag in question. General Cronje added a protest against the use of dynamite mines, and spoke of it as unlawful to employ natives against whites in war.

In his reply Colonel Baden-Powell stated that the Geneva Convention made no stipulation as to the number of Red Cross stations permissible. As far

as Mafeking was concerned it was only necessary for the besiegers to respect the hospital, the convent, and the women's laager, all of which were beyond the limits of the town. General Cronje had shelled all three, and only missed the hospital. The Boer gunners were not asked to respect the flags on the intermediate stations for the reception of wounded. As to mines, these were recognised adjuncts of civilised warfare. Pretoria's system of defence included mines. As to the native question, Colonel Baden-Powell said the Boers had fired upon the natives and raided their cattle, and the natives only defended their lives and property.

General Cronje made a direct appeal to the Baralong chief, Wessels Montsioa, urging him to send his women and children out of Mafeking and telling him the battle was not between white and black men. The chief in his reply alluded to the raiding of his cattle by Cronje's men, and added: "For himself he was a subject of the Queen, but the Queen had not instructed him to fight General Cronje. Her orders to him were to keep quiet. This he would do, but he could not find any safer place for the women and children than his own kraal."

Thus baffled, General Cronje resorted to his guns, which began to shoot once more with tremendous vigour. On October 31st he organised a determined attempt to capture the fort on Cannon Koppie. At a distance of between three and four thousand yards

from the koppie earthworks were thrown up, whence at dawn a heavy artillery fire was directed. Under cover of this a storming party pushed forward to within three hundred yards of the fort. Four big guns and the 100-pounder siege gun were dragged forward, the purpose in view being the capture of the koppie, which it was intended to use as a point from which to bombard the south-east part of the town. The engagement was a critical one for the garrison, but Colonel Walford and his men made the most of their opportunities; and though they had only one 7-pounder and two Maxims to oppose to the Boer artillery, they inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, who eventually had to beat a retreat. Captain the Hon. D. H. Marsham, Captain Pechell, and two sergeants-major of the B.S.A. Police killed and five men severely wounded represented the price paid for this victory. The first number of the *Mafeking Mail*, issued the following day (and to be "Issued Daily, Shells Permitting"), contained confident hopes of a speedy end to the siege, and announced that: "Major Lord E. Cecil, C.S.O., last evening issued the following under the heading of General Orders: 'The detachment of B.S.A. Police, forming the garrison of Cannon Koppie, under command of Colonel Walford, have this day performed a brilliant service by the gallant and determined stand made by them on their post in the face of a very hot shell-fire from the enemy.'"

CHAPTER XII

Three hundred Boers "capture" Lady Sarah Wilson—Viljoen exchanged—General Cronje goes south—General Snyman angry—The value of Sunday—A letter home—The Christmas armistice—The great assault on Game Tree Fort.

THE bombardment of Mafeking continued during November, unrelieved except by minor disputes between outposts and "sniping" on both sides. On November 6th Colonel Baden-Powell reported his total loss as two officers and seventeen men killed, and four officers and twenty-nine men wounded. Life, whilst it might be safe, was the reverse of salubrious for those whose days had to be spent in the damp and darkness of cellars and bomb-proofs. The rain of Mauser bullets on the roofs of corrugated iron was almost incessant. The warning of the look-out bell was taken up by the town dogs. But confidence as well as fear is happily infectious; and that the defenders did not lose heart is due in large measure to the cheery bearing of the commandant. "The Colonel is always smiling and is a host in

himself," wrote one of the correspondents on the 15th. "To see 'B.-P.' go whistling down the street, deep in thought, pleasing of countenance, bright and confident, is better than a pint of dry champagne." Two ladies refused to go to the women's laager, and, like many women in South Africa, being good shots, insisted on taking up positions with the other defenders.

Before the investment of the town was complete Lady Sarah Wilson, the war correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, who was with her husband, Captain Gordon Wilson, left on an expedition to Kuruman. She rode across two hundred miles of veldt accompanied only by her maid. During her absence, according to Mr. J. Angus Hamilton, the special correspondent of *Black and White*, Lady Sarah was the principal medium through which the garrison received its news about the trend of events; and when, after staying at Setlagoli "until the crude barbarity of the Dutch made it impossible for her to stop there any longer," she sought a permit to return to Mafeking, her work in supplying news to the besieged town had been discovered.

Once Lady Sarah Wilson had determined to throw herself upon the consideration of the Dutch General she lost little time in accomplishing her purpose. "Acting upon the advice of the field-cornet of the district, who, protesting to sympathise with her,

nevertheless in no way attempted to curb the ill-feeling which his fellow-countrymen indulged towards this gallant little woman, she left Setlagoli on December 2nd upon her return journey to the Boer lines outside Mafeking. When Lady Sarah arrived within a short distance of the Boer laager, for some inexplicable purpose General Snyman (who succeeded General Cronje in the command on November 18th) turned out three hundred Boers, armed for battle, who at once proceeded to successfully capture a solitary woman. She was then escorted to the Boer camp, where for some time no notice was taken of her explanations. After spending a few days in complete and abject misery—being held a prisoner of war by General Snyman whilst enjoying a safe permit of one of his field-cornets—a formal refusal was given to her request for permission to be escorted to our lines."

The Boer General intimated that if Colonel Baden-Powell would restore to his own people a certain important prisoner which we held, Lady Sarah would be permitted to rank as the basis of the exchange. Lady Sarah declined for her part to entertain the proposal. "B.-P.," however, was not of this mind, and in the result delivered up the notorious Viljoen (who was killed in action some time afterwards), and Lady Sarah Wilson rejoined her husband within the town.

Coincident with the departure of General Cronje for the south, natives were brought in large numbers to assist the Boers in digging trenches. As these trenches got nearer and nearer to the town so they approached and were approached by the counter trenches of the defenders. On November 18th an attempt was made to draw out the garrison by a feint. The Boers advanced in force, and then appeared to beat a hasty retreat. "B.-P.'s" scouts, however, found numbers of the enemy concealed; so, reports the Colonel, "we sat tight."

Early in December, taking a leaf from General Cronje's "Polite Letter Writer," Colonel Baden-Powell admonished his besiegers as to the penalty that awaited them should they continue to remain under arms against Great Britain. In a short time the Boer Republics would be in the hands of the English, and no sacrifice on their part would suffice to prevent that consummation. "Is it worth while," he asked them, "losing your lives in a vain attempt to stop the British invasion, or to take a town beyond your borders which, if taken, will be of no use to you? I may tell you," proceeded the indomitable Colonel, "that Mafeking cannot be taken by sitting down and looking at it, for we have ample supplies for several months. The Staats Artillery has done very little damage, and we are now protected by both troops and mines." The burghers, to whom

the communication was sent direct, were advised to return to their farms and families, for the garrison intended shortly to take the offensive.

General Snyman was very angry. He regarded the letter as impudent—in the first place because it was addressed to the burghers and not to him personally; in the second place because it was written in "bad Dutch." His retort to the Colonel, freely rendered, was "Come out and try." There were the burghers—let the British commander see if he could drive them away. "B.-P." quietly prosecuted his preparations for the offensive, and added to the strength and comfort of the forts and bomb-proofs so far as was possible. One step taken by "B.-P." was to organise a troop of lancers. He paraded them one Sunday, and their manœuvres were watched with interest by the Boers in the advanced trenches.

How the Sunday respite was appreciated is witnessed by all the letters that have got through. "Pale women and children emerge from the laager, dressed in their Sunday best, the shops are open and do a lively trade, services go on in the little English Church, still almost uninjured, and every one is able safely to ride and walk about the town and outside on the veldt within our lines. So different is the aspect of everything that one could hardly believe it is the same town. In the afternoon, under the

auspices of the Commanding Officer, sports are organised, concerts are given, and there is even some attempt at private theatricals. The band plays, and every one thoroughly enjoys himself."

Mr. Angus Hamilton dwells upon the subject of the Sabbath and on Colonel Baden-Powell's immense capacity for inventing entertainments as a set-off to the hideous nerve-strain that preceded and followed the Sunday's grace. "Where in England you people are saying 'Oh, bother Sunday!' 'How like a Sunday!' we say 'Thank God, it is Sunday!' . . . We live in every second of the hours which constitute the Sunday, and upon the passing of the day it is as though we have come into a world which upon the morrow has been turned over."

In a letter dated December 12th, which got through in a quill secreted in a Kaffir's pipe, Colonel Baden-Powell writes to his mother: "All going well with me. To-day I have been trying to find any Old Carthusians in the place to have a Carthusian dinner together, as it is Founders' Day; but so far, for a wonder, I believe I am the only one among the odd thousand people here. This is our sixtieth day of the siege, and I do believe we're beginning to get a little tired of it; but I suppose, like other things, it will come to an end some day. I have got such an interesting collection of mementoes of it to bring home. I wonder if Baden [Major Baden-Powell,

of the Scots Guards] is in the country? What fun if he should come up to relieve me! I don't know if this letter will get through the Boer outposts, but if it does I hope it will find you very well and flourishing."

Dingaan's Day—December 15th—opened with heavy firing, and further assaults were expected by the garrison; but no great damage was done, though the first shell, fired at half-past two a.m., found lodgment in the office of the headquarters staff, and there were some narrow escapes. The Boers devoted the afternoon to celebrating the anniversary of their independence by religious services. For the rest the day was one of deluge. Rain poured down in angry torrents. The streets were as rivers, bomb-proofs and trenches were flooded. About this time the *Standard and Diggers' News* cheerfully announced that the town was "flat"; and the English *Review of Reviews* anticipated that Mafeking would probably surrender at Christmas.

Christmas Day came and went. There was a mutual cessation of hostilities. "Peace on earth to men and good will in Mafeking," was the toast of the garrison. For the children Lady Sarah Wilson and a staff of eager assistants provided a Christmas tree.

Colonel Baden-Powell had meanwhile carefully planned a surprise for the Boers. He determined

to assault Game Tree Fort. He had personally reconnoitred the position—about a mile from Mafeking on the north-west—by night. Rich pasturage divided the town and the fort. The Colonel hoped to stop the fire from the fort, which rendered this pasturage dangerous. He trusted also to be able to open communications with Rhodesia, where Colonel Plumer was kept employed by the enemy. All his care, however, was frustrated through treachery; and the fight, which was fought on Boxing Day, has been compared to that of Game Tree Hollow, in which the American General Custer, though suffering a practical defeat, achieved a moral victory. "Captain R. Vernon with C Squadron, and Captain FitzClarence and D Squadron," writes Mr. Angus Hamilton, "led the attack; Captain Lord Charles Bentinck, with A Squadron, held the reserve upon the left, which was under the command of Colonel Hore, with Major Panzera and the artillery in position upon the extreme left of the line. The reserves, however, were not in action. The railway runs to within a few hundred yards of Game Tree, and an effort had been made to repair the line where it had previously been blown up by the enemy, in order that our armoured train, under Captain Williams and twenty men of the British South Africa Police, with 1-pounder Hotchkiss and Maxim, might move out to a point parallel

with Game Tree, in protection of our right flank. This flank was further supported by Captain Cowan and seventy men of the Bechuanaland Rifles, the entire operations from this side being under the command of Major Godley, while Colonel Baden-Powell and his staff, Major Lord Edward Cecil (Chief Staff Officer), Captain Wilson, A.D.C., and Lieutenant Hanbury Tracey watched the direction of events from Dummie Fort. Orders had been issued that Major Panzera should open with his guns so soon as it became possible to see from emplacements which had been specially constructed during the night. In the meantime the attacking squadrons were to take up their position; Captain R. Vernon, as the senior Imperial officer of those who were participating in the advance, being ordered to signal when he considered the moment had arrived to begin the charge."

The story of the great sortie is thus told by Reuter's correspondent: "As the grey dawn broke over the veldt, we watched anxiously to our left front, the spot where we knew our 7-pounders, under Major Panzera, had been emplaced during the night. Then, in the twilight, through the dark-green loom of the veldt, broke a flash and a cloud of white smoke. A second later, a flash showed bright over the enemy's position, followed by another, and yet another, as our two guns came

into action, aided by the one at Fort Ayr. Shot after shot fell rapidly round the enemy's position. As it grew lighter the Maxim joined in, rapping automatically, and to the right the armoured train crept slowly like a great black snake over the plain towards her destination. The whole scene commenced to unfold itself like a photo which is being developed. The outlines grew sharper, and we could see the Union Jack floating proudly over the leading truck of the train. The rattle of musketry broke on our ears, and we knew that our men had opened fire and been sighted by the enemy.

"The attack developed with marvellous rapidity to the east of Game Tree, and Vernon and FitzClarence took up their positions preparatory to a final rush. Away to the right flank Captain Cowan, with the Bechuanaland Rifles, was disposed to intercept reinforcements or the enemy's retreat. The armoured train, under Captain Williams, ran up as fast as the broken state of the line would allow. . . . Just before the sun rose the armoured train sounded her whistle. It was the signal from Captain Vernon that he was ready to rush the position, and to the guns to cease firing. As the sun rose we could see the khaki-clad troopers of the Protectorate Regiment rushing eagerly forward, hardly stopping to fire, waving their hats and cheering each other on.

The officers, true to every British tradition, were well in front of their men. It seemed scarcely seconds before they plunged into the scrub which surrounds the sandbag fort, and some one exclaimed, 'They are swarming over the bags; the position is ours.' Meanwhile, the firing was continuing furiously, and we waited for it to cease, expecting that the enemy would surrender or be bayoneted to a man.

"Then there was an anxious lull. A staff officer said, 'Our men are coming back.' It was only too true. Slowly, sullen, and sulky, the men fell back, those that were left of them turning to fire in desperate defiance now and again at the enemy's works. We could hear the hoarse shouts of the officers as they rallied the troops under cover of a hollow in the ground. Then there was a pause. There seemed very few in the little company which we could see gathering together. An aide-de-camp came galloping up from Major Godley, 'Captain Vernon, sir, has been repulsed,' he said. 'The position is practically impregnable to infantry, and Major Godley does not think it worth while trying again.' For a moment the Colonel hesitated, and we could see that the question as to whether he should or should not again attempt to carry the enemy's position was being weighed in his mind. Then he turned round to the C.S.O. and said, 'Let

the ambulance go out.' That was all. The battle of Game Tree was over."

How daring, how desperate, how gallant the attack had been was only learned later, when the tale of dead and wounded came to be told.

The Boers had prepared for the "surprise." Within three hundred yards of the fort the rush of bullets "was like the hum of myriads of locusts before the wind. Men," writes Mr. Angus Hamilton, "were beginning to fall as they reached within two hundred yards. Captain Sandford fell mortally wounded with a bullet in the spine. His last moment was spent in ordering his men to continue. Further round to the west, where D Squadron was engaged, Captain FitzClarence fell with a bullet in the leg. Sitting up and mastering his agony, he, with extraordinary composure, directed Lieutenant S. Winburne to proceed with the charge. By this time they had arrived within one hundred yards of the fort, when Captain Vernon, who, with Lieutenant Paton, was steadying his men for the last mad rush, was struck by a bullet in the body. For a brief interval he stopped, but refusing the entreaty of Lieutenant Paton to fall out, joined that officer in again leading the charge. From the point which they had gained the character of the fort was seen; it was recognised as impregnable. It rose some seven feet from the

ground, from the edges of the deep, wide ditch, whose sides it was impossible to scale. A certain and moral death stared them in the face within twenty-five yards. But not a man was dismayed, and one and all steadily continued. The ditch was before them, the fort above them, and through the three tiers of loopholes came the enemy's fire.

"Our men from one side of the ditch fired point-blank at an enemy who, from behind their loopholes, fired point-blank at them. Here Captain Vernon was hit again, but, nerving himself for a final effort, he, with Lieutenant Paton and a few men, jumped into the ditch, clinging with their feet and hands in an attempt to scale an inaccessible rampart. There Captain Vernon, Lieutenant Paton, Corporal Pickard, Sergeant Ross, and a few more were killed. Captain Vernon and Lieutenant Paton managed by superhuman efforts to reach the loopholes, into which they thrust their revolvers. What execution they did we do not know, but they each emptied the chambers of their weapons before they were killed.

"Captain Vernon was shot in the head, the third wound which he had received within two hundred yards. Lieutenant Paton was shot in the region of the heart. With the dead and the dying about them, and the area of the wounded encircling the fort, those who were left fell back, savagely and

sullenly, with a contempt for the enemy's fire, and the keen wish to renew the attack. After retiring to a point within range of the fort they lay down, a circle of dogged and determined men, to enjoy the conjecture of pot-shooting, until the flags of mercy came from the rear and the men were ordered to retreat. When they fell in again, of the men of C Squadron there were but five men unwounded, and by far the greater complement of the others were found among the killed. Our killed were twenty-five, our wounded thirty. The aggregate of the force engaged was a trifle under two hundred; but sixty-one men only were concerned in the charge, of whom fifty-five were either killed or wounded."

When hostilities had been suspended and the Red Cross was flying over the scene of the battle, "the Boers left their trench and swarmed around to inspect the injuries they had inflicted upon their foe." It was a sad company which gathered that evening to lay to their long rest the comrades who had so bravely fallen. "Over the darkling veldt came the wail of the Last Post. We had," writes one chronicler, "done our best and had failed, not for want of courage, but because of treachery which had betrayed our plans to the enemy." The day was known thereafter as "Black Boxing Day."

CHAPTER XIII

New Year's Eve: A simple service—Reduced rations—Relief "in a few weeks"—"Can you hold out till May?"—Ignoring the Geneva Convention—King Fever and his colleagues—Panic?

THE New Year was ushered in by as many as could be spared from the forts and trenches gathering together within the shadow of the little English church for a short and simple devotional service. The scene is impressively described by Mr. Angus Hamilton. "It had been raining during the evening; the air was fresh and fragrant, and the ground was very damp. The men came in their cloaks; they carried their rifles and wore their bandoliers. There were perhaps one hundred of them. When everything was ready the great stillness of the night was broken gently by a prelude from the harmonium, which, dropping into a low tone, became a mere accompaniment to the human voices. Then the volume of music grew somewhat fuller, until it carried in its depths the voices of the singers merged into one torrent of stirring melody;

then there was a fresh pause, and as the echoes of the hymn died away, lingering in the rafters of the building until countless spirits seemed to be taking up the refrain, the voice of the preacher broke out in words which manfully endeavoured to cheer the congregation. We stood and listened, rapt with an attention which gave more to the scene than to the exhortations of the man, and waiting for the time to sing the National Anthem.

"In these moments, when one is so far from the Queen and the capital of her great Empire, the singing of the National Anthem has a weight and meaning much finer and much greater than that imparted to the hymn when the words are sung at home. Presently the voices took up the hymn, throwing into the darkness of the church some whiteness of the dawn which will usher in the days of peace upon the termination of the war. The National Anthem, sung amid these surroundings, was incomparably beautiful, seeming to strengthen the irresolute, even cheering those who were already strong, and imparting to every one a happier frame of mind and a greater spirit of contentment. Scenes on a smaller scale, but identical in purpose, were enacted at almost every one of our posts, and the hour of midnight must have borne to the watchful sentries of the enemy some slight knowledge of the pleasing duty upon which the garrison was engaged."

General Cronje paid a brief visit to Mafeking again with the New Year, and got to work with his big guns. The month of January was remarkable for the shelling of the women's laager, the convent, and the hospital, despite Colonel Baden-Powell's strong protests. Numbers of women and children were killed and mutilated by Boer shells. On one occasion for two whole hours the quick-firing guns of the enemy poured a deadly hail into the women's laager, creating scenes of panic and consternation which it is not fitting to describe. There was trouble with the natives. The Baralong chief had to be deposed, and the reins of office handed to his two chief councillors. Then there was unrest caused by native spies whose repression was now more than ever necessary after the affair of Game Tree Fort. One was caught, convicted, and having confessed himself an emissary of the Boers, was shot. The Boers tried to quarter a large number of native women upon the town. But the native women in the town had already come under suspicion; and Colonel Baden-Powell for this and other obvious reasons refused to give the newcomers room. At the close of the consultation over this matter the staff officer engaged, Mr. Moncrieff and his orderly were nearly shot, a Mauser bullet piercing the white flag before they had returned to the British lines.

One day was much like another. Rumours began to trickle in of relief. Hope deferred made the heart sick; and the sickness was warded off principally by anger roused by the Boer tactics. It appeared that all the renegades and rascals fighting under the vierkleur had been sent to the attack of Mafeking. The tactics adopted by the Boers had become cowardly in the extreme. By the middle of the month private stores were exhausted. The authorities had taken charge of all eatables. Flour had given out. Bread was made of oats. For fresh meat dependence had to be placed on raided cattle. Every commodity commanded abnormal prices. The garrison was placed upon half-rations—half a pound of meat and the same quantity of bread per day. The whole available milk supply was, on January 18th, commandeered for the sick and wounded and women and children. An order was issued that any horses shot by the enemy were to be handed over to the commissariat. Baden-Powell tried to avert all sickness that finds its origin in depression of spirits, and his efforts were ably seconded. Thus on the 21st—a Sunday—"a baby show was held, and prizes were given for the best babies born during the siege." And there was some glimmer of satisfaction just now; for the Colonel had been able to report that the enemy had been pushed back on three sides out of rifle range of the town;

and had furthermore been obliged to remove their heavy siege gun because of the fire directed upon it from the advanced British trenches. A few days later the Boers had to again take up new positions further away from the town.

On January 20th the Mafeking correspondent of the *Times* wrote: "Yesterday we completed the first one hundred days of our siege. . . . The town itself has not suffered very much; here and there its area has been more confined for purposes of defence, while the streets and buildings bear witness to the effects of the bombardment. Houses are shattered, gaping holes in the walls of buildings, furrows in the roads, broken trees, wrecked telegraph poles, and that general appearance of destruction which marks the path of a cyclone are the outward and visible signs of the enemy's fire. We shall leave in Mafeking a population somewhat subdued and harassed with anxiety for their future, since the public and private losses will require the work of many anxious years before any restoration of the fallen fortunes can be effected. The pity of it is that all this distress might have been so easily avoided, and would have been, had the authorities in Cape Town and at home taken any heed of the very pressing messages which were despatched daily to them; but it was decreed that Mafeking should shift for itself for so long as it was

able, and then—surrender. This, however, did not meet the approval of Colonel Baden-Powell, with the result that we are still fighting and still holding our own." The correspondent is cynical as to whether relief will ever reach the town, notwithstanding his remarks concerning the future of its people. However, before the end of the month the receipt of a message from Lord Roberts promising relief "in a few weeks," and congratulating the garrison, did much to instil new life into the defence; and a telegram was sent to the Queen expressing loyal devotion to her Majesty and the resolve to maintain the Queen's supremacy in Mafeking. The *Mafeking Mail* of January 25th thus refers to Lord Roberts' message: "Lord Roberts telegraphs to the Colonel commanding his warm congratulations on Mafeking's plucky defence; he only wishes he could get help to us at once, and earnestly hopes we can manage to hold out for a few weeks more, when the situation will be changed. This we can do for a few *months* more if required." On November 1st the *Mail* had looked forward to relief "this day week."

On January 26th Bradley's Hotel was partially wrecked by a shell. Later in the afternoon Lady Sarah Wilson, and Captain Wilson, who had both been under medical care, were seated with Major Goold Adams in a passage in the upper storey of the convent, when a shell burst about four feet over

their heads, covering them with a pile of bricks and rubbish, but fortunately they escaped with a few bruises.

During January Colonel Baden-Powell found it necessary to institute a paper currency for amounts ranging from three shillings to threepence. He also authorised the issue by the local branch of the Standard Bank of notes of £1 and £5 face value respectively on banks outside the limits of the Cape Colony. These matters have called to mind the fact that in collaboration with Colonel Templer "B.-P." once endeavoured to bring about a change in the coinage. A feature of the dual invention was the simultaneous coining of two metals—gun metal and gold or silver and gold—by one process. The Mint authorities appear to have regarded the scheme as being more ingenious than necessary.

February opened quietly. On the 3rd Colonel Baden-Powell got a message through his lines. It reached the officer in command at Buluwayo on the 9th: "All well here. On the 23rd ult. the enemy moved north-east, supporting a laager 4,500 yards from town. We pushed our advance works in that direction, and mounted 'Lord Nelson,' an old naval smooth-bore in the emplacement, 3,100 yards from the enemy. On the evening of January 29th it was unmasked, and shelled the enemy's camp with complete success. Next morning the laager was

moved back two miles. Our casualties for the past two days from shell-fire were three killed and two wounded. General Snyman, in reply to my letter as regards the deliberate shelling of the women and children's camp by the Boers on January 27th, offered no apology, and by a transparent falsehood practically admits that he ordered it. I have told him that I have established temporary premises for Boer prisoners near the women's laager and hospital in order to protect these places from deliberate shelling."

On February 4th, during a temporary truce, some Boers exchanged two copies of the *Standard and Diggers' News* for a bottle of spirits. The accounts given in the paper of Boer victories on the Tugela "were taken with a grain of salt." Much anxiety was felt for Ladysmith—more than for Mafeking itself. Attempts were made to gauge the success or otherwise of the operations in the south by the spitefulness of the besiegers. On February 11th Colonel Baden-Powell issued an order to the effect that the Commander-in-Chief had requested him to endeavour to hold the town against the enemy until the middle of May. It was computed by the Commandant that this would be possible; and though his order was issued on the morrow of a trying night in the trenches it was accepted with the utmost cheerfulness by garrison and people.

The same day Lady Sarah Wilson presented to the troops several Union Jacks that had been worked by the ladies in the town.

On the 14th there was a lull in the bombardment, and excitement was observable in the Boer camp. This condition of affairs continued for several days. Its cause was the subject of all sorts of conjectures on the part of the garrison. The lull was coincident with the relief of Kimberley after a siege of one hundred and twenty-three days. On the 20th a soup kitchen was opened to supply the native labourers —some six hundred in number—with nourishment. The Boers at this time were utilising natives in the formation of a fighting front. The advanced trenches of the British were then seventy yards nearer the enemy than the brickfields; and the Boers approached under cover of the natives. The destruction of some of their brick forts by dynamite and certain devices of Colonel Baden-Powell for drawing their fire at night had, together with the news from Kimberley, shaken their nerves.

There was a sad spectacle in the town on the 22nd in the degradation of a sergeant-major for misappropriation of stores. The case involved the complete reorganisation of the commissariat department.

Typhoid, diphtheria, and malaria were now "helping the enemy's guns." But a diary jotting contains

this entry: "We have received a message from the Queen to-day with great pride that her Majesty should think of us in this little hamlet of the veldt. It helps us to eat our black bread and sweetens sickening horseflesh, when we know that the Queen herself is watching and waiting for news from Mafeking. Such a message makes men willing to endure disease and even death patiently. Every one feels that by continuing to hold out against a subtle and relentless foe who has broken all the laws of civilised warfare and disregarded the provisions of the Council of Geneva, Mafeking will not have suffered in vain."

The children were the chief victims of diphtheria and other illnesses, and the little graveyard near the women's laager grew larger and larger as the young lives were prematurely cut short. The nurses found a ready helper in "B.-P." An officer, writing home, has declared that it was one of the finest sights in the town to see "B.-P." with a child in his arms, soothing its pain and comforting it in its grief. The commandant's solicitude for all in hospital has been characteristically thorough. Each day during the siege he has found time to visit the sick and wounded.

There is every reason to believe that Mafeking was near a critical state. King Fever and his escort were proving more powerful than Cronje or Snyman. Letters sent home by way of the Rhodesian route bear testimony to something very like panic. "We

look," writes one of the besieged, "with hope deferred for relief. Men prefer to remain at their posts to moving about in order to work up an appetite which cannot be satisfied. The natives are in a worse plight than we are. . . . From their advanced posts the enemy rake the streets and market square, and it is impossible to dodge their bullets. Even the headquarters mess fares scantily and dangerously in these times. Like the saints under the altar, we cry out, 'How long, O Lord?—how long?'"

Up to February 19th two hundred and ninety-two persons had been killed, wounded, or had died of disease. "Our garrison is so small that it would be criminal to make its weakness public, yet there is never so much as a whisper of any one having suggested the possibility of surrender, nor are we likely to run short of food or ammunition. It is because we do not mean to get beaten on the post that we are cheerfully enduring hardships to-day rather than look upon a surrender as in any degree possible to-morrow." A *Times* telegram dated March 5th stated: "The water supply is no longer free from parasitical contamination. . . . Deaths of women in the laager are of daily occurrence owing to inefficient sanitation, which causes malignant fevers, and the absence of nourishing food." On the other hand the Boers had been "completely expelled" from the brickfields and an ordnance factory had been established.

CHAPTER XIV

Renewed confidence—Colonel Plumer's gallant efforts to reach the beleaguered garrison—Movements in the south—"The pangs of hunger"—An ugly rumour from Pretoria—Feeling at home—A pen-portrait drawn in Mafeking—A Boer tribute.

"A NERVOUS man," writes Colonel Baden-Powell in his history of the Matabele campaign of 1896, "is forty thousand times worse than a frightened woman." At the end of February Mafeking had its nervous men. It was not to be wondered at. But since the alarmist statements quoted in the preceding chapter more hopeful messages have reached the outer world. A despatch dated March 25th declares that "the tales of natives dying of starvation are gross exaggerations." The news of Kimberley's relief doubtless led to sanguine expectations. But Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer, with seven hundred men, was nearing Mafeking, though opposed by flooded river as well as by the Boers. On February 27th the redoubtable Cronje surrendered at Paardeberg. On February 28th General

Buller, following Lord Dundonald and the Natal Carbineers, entered Ladysmith, and the investment of that place was put an end to after lasting one hundred and twenty days. On March 15th Lord Roberts took possession of Bloemfontein.

There was thus less reason for despair as regards the enemy without; and as the good news reached him one may be sure Colonel Baden-Powell made the most of it for the encouragement of the garrison. Messages came through warning us against pessimistic statements; and though reports were current of an expedition of relief from Kimberley, while at the Cape and elsewhere preparations were made to celebrate its success, one may be pretty certain in the light of what has actually ensued that when General Roberts mentioned May as the month of relief it was May that he meant—without prejudice, of course, to anything Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer might be able to effect.

Colonel Baden-Powell was no less prompt to use the news of Cronje's surrender as a means of disheartening his foes than to post it for the encouragement of the town. From his advanced trenches beyond the brickfields he supplied the invading Boers with information concerning Paardeberg by placing copies of the *Mafeking Mail* round large stones and casting these unpleasant reminders into the enemy's lines. Another striking instance of

"B.-P.'s" ingenuity is chronicled. The shells taken from Dr. Jameson's column at Doornkop were fired into Mafeking. It was grim irony. But the irony did not end here. The missiles were collected, melted down, charged, and hurled once more at the Boers.

On March 15th, after severe fighting at Lobatsi, sixty miles north of Mafeking, Colonel Plumer was forced to retire. The evacuation of Vryburg * and the fall of Kuruman † had rendered the task of bringing aid from the south especially difficult; but the advance of Lord Methuen and the Kimberley Light Horse to Warrenton, and the fighting which took place there and at Fourteen Streams (a few miles further north) must have had an appreciable effect in lightening the pressure of the forces around Mafeking.

On March 30th Colonel Nicholson, commanding at Buluwayo, received the following despatch from Colonel Baden-Powell: "Mafeking, March 27th.—All well here. The enemy to-day are giving us the hottest shelling of the siege. Parties of dismounted Boers have threatened to attack various points, but afterwards retired, although we lay low, hoping to

* Major Scott, finding only six men willing to aid him in the defence of the capital of the Protectorate, shot himself.

† Kuruman was held by a small force from the beginning of November till New Year's Day.

draw them on. Our casualties are slight up to the present. During the past week we have pushed back the enemy's advanced trenches, so that the town is now comparatively free from musketry fire. All promises well for the eventual cutting off of this force of the enemy if we can hold Snyman here." On the same day that Colonel Baden-Powell penned the foregoing what is said to have been a record bombardment took place, no fewer than two hundred and fifty shells being fired from the Boer guns, seventy shells being from the 100-pounder Krupp.

On March 30th this record was beaten, three hundred shells being fired into the residential part of the town. On the same date Colonel Baden-Powell reported the general health and spirits of the garrison was "good," and that the food was "holding out well." On April 2nd it was estimated that so far fourteen hundred 94-pound shells and several thousand smaller projectiles had been thrown into the town by the enemy.

General Snyman made another attempt to ambuscade the garrison by the old device of a pretended retreat; but once again the author of "Aids to Scouting" was too much for the Boer general. In March a minor incident, especially interesting to philatelists, was reported—the issue by Colonel Baden-Powell of siege postage stamps coincident with the institution of a corps of despatch runners.

On March 31st Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer, with two hundred and seventy mounted men, a few unmounted infantry, and one Maxim again penetrated south of Lobatsi. Leaving the unmounted men and the machine gun at Ramathlabama he advanced to within six miles of Mafeking. Simultaneously there was a sortie from the town. After an hour's heavy fighting Plumer had once more to retire. The gallant commandant of the Rhodesian Regiment was himself wounded in the right arm and his horse was shot under him. Lieutenant-Colonel Bodle, Captain MacLaren, and Captain Rolt were among the wounded. Captain Fred Crewe, who distinguished himself in the rebellion of 1896, was shot dead while covering the retreat of the others. Lieutenant Milligan, the Yorkshire cricketer, was killed while holding the position assigned to him. General Snyman sent a letter under a flag of truce requesting Colonel Baden-Powell to send out an ambulance and bring in Colonel Plumer's dead. The Boer leader described the battlefield as strewn with bodies, and said that although the Boers had done their best for the wounded their doctors were unable to cope with the work. The total casualties proved to be: Killed, 2 officers and 6 men; wounded, 3 officers and 36 men; missing, 2 officers and 11 men.

Between March 31st and April 5th Mafeking had a comparative respite. General Snyman had taken

off some of his men and guns to bar the road of the relief column from the north. On April 5th he returned, having with him now the son of General Cronje. His return was signalised by a bombardment of the severest character. It seemed that if he was not more angered at the prolonged defiance of the defenders, he had some cause to fear that a force more powerful than anything the Rhodesian leader could bring to bear was on its way to dispute the position. Colour is lent to this supposition by the news sent on April 5th by Lady Sarah Wilson to the *Daily Mail.* During General Snyman's absence it would appear that many of the Boers left under Commandant Botha sent "messages of good will" to Englishmen in the town who had formerly been their friends. Furthermore Commandant Botha had been "very civil" about Captain MacLaren, who was then lying dangerously wounded in their laager two miles from the town. And here we have another striking story to add to the romance of Masonry in the battlefield, "Owing to Captain MacLaren being a Freemason, and to his meeting with brother masons among the Boers," he "received every attention," the Boers sending daily bulletins as to his condition.

On April 5th Lady Sarah Wilson, who was among those who despatched alarming reports as to the condition of Mafeking in February, again sent a

gloomy message. On March 27th Mr. Whales, of the *Daily Chronicle*, had written, "Our troubles are nearly over now." This was before Plumer's repulse. The reaction is seen in Lady Sarah Wilson's opening words, "The pinch of hunger is beginning to be felt. There is no news of relief, which seems farther off than ever." And yet here again all was not gloom. The enemy do not seem to have recovered any of their lost ground. It was still possible to get messages through the Boer lines. On April 17th, the day on which Lady Sarah Wilson's telegram, sent *viâ* Gaberones, was published in London, there appeared in the papers a despatch from Lorenco Marquez, dated April 16th, which stated that Lieutenant Smitheman, a distinguished scout, got to Mafeking through the Boer lines and returned to Colonel Plumer's camp on the 8th, with Mafeking despatches and other useful information. On April 7th it was reported on good authority that the town had resigned itself to endure the siege so long as food held out, which meant two months or more; and that "a Scottish crofter named Sims had introduced a method of making nourishing porridge from oat bran."

At the end of March Lord Roberts, replying to a telegram from the Mayor of East London, appealing to him to "remember Mafeking," said, according to a correspondent of the *Daily News*: "I am

pleased to assure the citizens of East London that the relief of Mafeking is engaging my most earnest attention."

In the capital city of the Empire no less than in East London public feeling ran high as to what seemed to be the neglect of a little border town and its heroic defenders. It was said that the Queen had sent for Lord Salisbury to urge that pressure should be brought to bear upon Lord Roberts. The story is only referred to as an indication of the drift of popular sentiment. There were those who gave vent to their feelings by condemning the policy of holding the place at all. These were met by arguments of the nature of those that influenced Colonel Baden-Powell when he reached Mafeking last year. Then many set to work to divine the routes along which relief might reach the beleaguered garrison. It was felt that the sortie of March 31st would not have been made if the garrison had not been in sore straits; and that Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer was too heavily handicapped to hope for any tangible success. What did the withdrawal of Lord Methuen mean? Indignation was the first feeling aroused. This was followed, however, by the suggestion that the order to withdraw might really be a ruse to cover the advance of the Kimberley Light Horse by way of Boshof (where Lord Methuen fought a successful engagement in which

the French Colonel Villebois-Mareuil was killed), Christiana, Lochtenburg, and Malmane, to Mafeking, meanwhile two other columns would move forward, one from Barkley West and the other along the railway through Fourteen Streams, effecting a junction at Taungs. For the time being not much attention was aroused by Sir Frederick Carrington's departure from the Cape for Beira with the Rhodesia Relief Column, except in connection with the friendly action of Portugal in permitting the passage of troops through Portuguese territory. At a later stage, however, more importance was attached to the doings of Sir Frederick (who reached Marandella on May 8th), and it was openly stated that Mafeking was his objective. With the force are a number of Australian bushmen. The distance from Beira to Mafeking is 1,102 miles, 287 of which have to be traversed by road.

Pretoria has been the nest of startling rumours during the progress of the war. It was through Pretoria that we learned first of the disaster at Dundee—the beginning of a series; and when anything of a gloomy nature has since emanated from the same source it has been implicitly believed in by many people. A rumour of a different nature did come from Pretoria once, several months ago—a rumour that Mafeking had been relieved. It was repeated and gained credence for a time.

On April 10th the Transvaal capital was the centre of another rumour about Mafeking — this time that its brave commandant was dead. Reuter sent the rumour over to London; it came to us also from New York. But it was too hard to believe. "B.-P." was worshipped by thousands who had never seen him, had never read a single line that he wrote until the words Mafeking and Baden-Powell had become part of the common speech. No! the public preferred to go on preparing to celebrate the relief of Mafeking in a way that should place the Kimberley and Ladysmith jubilations in the shade; and looking to the Boer rumours affecting Mafeking alone it can scarcely be said that confidence in the continued safety of Mafeking and its defender was unjustified.

The reported refusal of the Hull School Board to vote a holiday for the children in their schools on the expected receipt of the news of the relief of Mafeking inspired a correspondent to send the following protest to a local journal: "I have a son, he has never been away from school, excepting when ill, since he commenced to go, but he will be absent that day, and his father will also have his holiday. Perhaps I am more interested in Mafeking than many Hull people, for the reason that for three years I was groom to Colonel Baden-Powell, and therefore know him, ay, and worship him too." The

letter is typical. A man may not be a hero to his valet. But "B.-P." is a hero to his groom.

Then there were the Charterhouse boys, past and present, belonging to a school ever dear to Baden-Powell's heart, and to whose magazine, *The Grey Friar*, he had been a valued contributor. They had started and carried to a brilliant issue a Mafeking Relief Fund. A committee was formed in January. Before the winds of March had ceased to blow £1,000 had been cabled to the Bank of South Africa to "B.-P.'s" credit; £400 more had been raised in addition; and 145 cases of goods had been despatched to the Cape. A pair of field-glasses and a few other gifts the committee desired the hero of Mafeking to retain as personal mementoes. To Carthusians the thought "Too late" was too painful to contemplate. Moreover they had confidence in as well as admiration for "B.-P." What miracles this same confidence will work! At the school sports at Godalming the headmaster, Dr. Rendall, had, only a day or two before the rumour of "B.-P.'s" death reached London, enlarged upon the indomitable resource and courage of Colonel Baden-Powell, adding, "They had hoped to have hoisted their flag in honour of Mafeking's relief. However, when Colonel Baden-Powell next visited the Charterhouse he would be received with flying colours."

"B.-P.'s" old master, Canon Haig-Brown, was as

confident as the most sanguine of the public that his "old boy" would return home again safe and sound. And giving the rumour a wide berth he proceeded with his appeal to all the gallant Colonel's friends and admirers to contribute towards a fund for a personal testimonial to one whose "presence inspirited every man to the height of endurance and courage."

But the cost of eternal vigilance is great. Even "B.-P." must have felt the enormous strain put upon him both within and without the town. Yet many of the letters home gave an impression that he had grown stronger rather than weaker during the siege. To those to whom "B.-P." had come to be a sort of joyous *farceur* who went about the world making jokes, practical and other, the pen portrait which the *Times* correspondent sent home in January from Mafeking just after the deposition of the Baralong chief, Wessels, should prove informative.

"Colonel Baden-Powell," wrote the correspondent, "is young, as men go in the Army, with a keen appreciation of the possibilities of his career. His countenance is keen, his stature short, his features sharp and smooth. He is eminently a man of determination, with great physical endurance and capacity, and extraordinary reticence. His reserve is unbending, and one would say, quoting a phrase of Mr. Pinero's, that fever would be the only heat

which would permeate his body. He does not go about freely, since he is tied to his office through the multitudinous cares of his command, and he is chiefly happy when he can snatch the time to escape upon one of those nocturnal, silent expeditions, which alone calm and assuage the perpetual excitement of his present existence. Outwardly, he maintains an impenetrable screen of self-control, observing with a cynical smile the foibles and caprices of those around him. He seems ever bracing himself to be on guard against a moment in which he should be swept by some unnatural and spontaneous enthusiasm, in which by a word, by an expression of face, by a movement, or in the turn of a phrase, he should betray the rigours of the self-control under which he lives. Every passing townsman regards him with curiosity not unmixed with awe. Every servant in the hotel watches him, and he, as a consequence, seldom speaks without a preternatural deliberation and an air of incisive finality. He seems to close every argument with a snap, as though the steel manacles of his ambition had checkmated the emotions of the man in the instincts of the officer. He weighs each remark before he utters it, and suggests by his manner, as by his words, that he has considered the different effects it might conceivably have on any mind as the expression of his own mind.

"As an officer, he has given to Mafeking a complete and magnificent security, to the construction of which he has brought a very practical knowledge of the conditions of Boer warfare, of the Boers themselves, and of the strategic value of the adjacent areas. His espionage excursions to the Boer lines have gained him an intimate and accurate idea of the value of the opposing forces and a mass of *data* by which he can immediately counteract the enemy's attack. He loves the night, and after his return from the hollows in the veldt, where he has kept so many anxious vigils, he lies awake, hour after hour upon his camp mattress in the verandah, tracing out, in his mind, the various means and agencies by which he can forestall their move, which, unknown to them, he had personally watched. He is a silent man. In the noisy day he yearns for the noiseless night, in which he can slip into the vistas of the veldt, an unobtrusive spectator of the mystic communion of tree with tree, of twilight with darkness, of land with water, of early morn with fading night, with the music of the journeying winds to speak to him and to lull his thoughts. As he makes his way across our lines the watchful sentry strains his eyes a little more to keep the figure of the Colonel before him, until the undulations of the veldt conceal his progress. He goes in the privacy of the night, when it is no longer a season of moonlight, when,

although the stars are full, the night is dim. The breezes of the veldt are warm and gentle, impregnated with the fresh fragrances of the Molopo, although, as he walks with rapid, almost running, footsteps, leaving the black blurr of the town for the arid and stony areas to the west, a new wind meets him, a wind that is clear and keen and dry—the wind of the wastes that wanders for ever over the monotonous sands of the desert. He goes on, never faltering, bending for a moment behind a clump of rocks, screening himself next behind some bushes, crawling upon his hands and knees. His head is low, his eyes gaze straight upon the camp of the enemy; in a little, he moves again, his inspection is over, and he either changes to a fresh point or startles some dozing sentry as he slips back into town."

The portrait is in keeping with that conjured up by a perusal of Baden-Powell's books, especially by his history of the Matabele trouble in 1896, and by that brilliant booklet "Aids to Scouting," the proof-sheets of which he corrected in Mafeking and returned on the last day that communications remained open with the outside world. In "Aids to Scouting" is concentrated the essence of a wide experience. Had the lessons it contains—lessons urged by Colonel Baden-Powell long before the "Aids" appeared—been taken to heart by those for

whose benefit they were enjoined, surely it is not too much to say that some of the most depressing incidents of the war would have been avoided. The foreigner has not failed to make use of the book—the golden rule of which is "practise in peace time"—and even the Boers themselves have not disdained to consult the work of one whom they have referred to as the first *rooi-baatje* they have met who can fight in their fashion and give them points in the contest. To-day it is being said in Service circles that "B.-P." should long ago have been made the head of a great military school for the training of scouts for all forms of warfare.

CHAPTER XV

Message from the Queen—"B.-P.'s" "most cheery telegram" to "Bobs"—The Relief—How the news was received—An Empire's joy.

APRIL dragged its weary length along, and May had reached maturity without bringing the long-looked-for relief to the besieged town. Up to May 18th the relief operations taken under the direction of Lord Roberts were still a mystery. London at this time was a prey to all sorts of rumours, good and bad. Questions were asked in the House of Commons, but the official sources of information had nothing but "hope" for the inquirers. Popular faith having been centred respectively in Sir Frederick Carrington, Sir Archibald Hunter, and in certain phantom columns of whose existence there seemed no evidence save that derived by inference from Boer anxiety, it began to be believed that if relief were ever to reach Mafeking it would be through Colonel Plumer. The idea was encouraged that Colonel Plumer's hands would

be strengthened materially by Sir Frederick Carrington's operations in Rhodesia releasing from protective duty the Rhodesian Regiment at the same time that Lord Roberts' movements in the south would necessitate the weakening of the Boer forces around Mafeking, if they did not indeed precipitate the actual abandonment of the investment of the town.

But I anticipate. Taking up once again the thread of my brief chronicle of the siege itself, it appears that on April 10th Colonel Baden-Powell reported "all well." Under the same date news was sent out from the town to the effect that several native women who attempted to escape through the Boer lines had been "turned back after being stripped and sjamboked."

On April 11th, after a heavy bombardment of the town, General Snyman made an unsuccessful attempt to take Fort Abrams by an assault in which the foreign mercenaries took a somewhat prominent part. The assault was followed by a further bombardment. Apart from the rain of shot poured over the besieged from the smaller guns of the besiegers, the big gun fired nearly sixteen hundred rounds or, in other words, sent some eighty tons of metal into Mafeking. Thirty 14-pounder shells were fired into the women's laager; and whilst a messenger from "B.-P.," carrying a white flag, was

out protesting against the continued breach of the rules of civilised warfare, the hospital was shelled by a Maxim-Nordenfelt.

The hearts of the garrison, however, had been cheered by something more than the nutritious if "slightly sour" sowan (or oat bran) porridge of the ingenious Scotsman Sims. A message was received by Colonel Baden-Powell from the Queen, in which Her Majesty congratulated the commandant and his men on their gallant stand, and trusted that they would be able to hold out until the relief, which the Queen hoped was then near at hand, reached them. Coincidently with the Royal missive there arrived from Lord Roberts a message asking Colonel Baden-Powell to hold out till May 18th.

On the night of Good Friday, on which day the foregoing messages were read to the garrison, Colonel Plumer sent out forty cattle "boys" with oxen for the town. The Boers shot the drivers, captured the cattle, and forthwith instituted what is described as a hand-to-hand cordon round the lines of the defence. They also began to destroy the railway to the south. April 14th was marked by several striking incidents. In the first place the Boer gunners were again feverishly active, though General Snyman seems to have failed to induce his burghers to attempt another assault. Then a party of Fingoes who went out without any authority to capture

oxen, induced to risk their lives by the prices fetched by cattle in the town, were led into an ambush by treacherous Baralongs. After a long and stubborn fight, in which they killed six Boers and wounded many more, they were themselves shot down to a man. A correspondence ensued in which General Snyman accused Colonel Baden-Powell of employing barbarians, and the Colonel, in denying his responsibility for what had happened, reminded the Boer leader of the fact that it was on the Boer side that the responsibility for native reprisals rested. It may be added here that, consequent doubtless on some understanding between Colonel Baden-Powell and Colonel Plumer, and despite Boer vigilance, some twelve hundred native refugees from Mafeking had reached the camp of the last-named officer up to May 4th.

On April 15th, of thirteen native women who attempted to run the blockade the Boers killed nine and wounded two. The besiegers at this date were estimated at 3,000 men. "All well" was reported by "B.-P." on the 20th. Major Baillie, writing to the *Morning Post* on this date, observes: "Things are quiet to-day. We must hang on for a month or more. We can stick it for two months or more. Nobody minds." Two days later Lady Sarah Wilson wrote to the *Daily Mail*: "We are all now eating horse in our daily ration." A message

sent from Colonel Plumer's camp on April 23rd reported the burial of the body of the Lieutenant Milligan who was at first thought to have been only wounded. On April 25th Colonel Baden-Powell reported "All well" and situation unchanged, save that another feeble attack had been made by "half-hearted infantry."

Before the end of April Colonel Plumer had recovered from his wound, and had organised a pigeon post between his camp and Mafeking. Captain Rolt and Captain MacLaren were also making rapid progress towards recovery from the wounds they received in the engagement of March 31st.

On April 27th one of the correspondents forwarded the text, as follows, of a message Colonel Baden-Powell had addressed to Lord Roberts: "After two hundred days' siege I desire to bring to your lordship's notice the exceptionally good spirit of loyalty that pervades all classes of this garrison. The patience of everybody in Mafeking in making the best of things under the long strain of anxiety, hardship, and privation, is beyond all praise, and is a revelation to me. The men, half of whom are unaccustomed to the use of arms, have adapted themselves to their duties with the greatest zeal, readiness, and pluck; and the devotion of the women is remarkable. With such a spirit, our organisation

runs like clock-work, and I have every hope it will pull us successfully through." The foregoing is apparently the "most cheery telegram" referred to by Lord Roberts as received by him on the date given.

The tale that has been told of the latter half of April may almost suffice for the story of the early days of May, so far as the telegraph has told it to us. Here is a characteristic extract from a Reuter despatch of May 1st (*viâ* Lorenco Marquez, May 15th): "The enemy this morning shelled Mackenzie's Fort for two hours, but the Boer officers could not induce their infantry to advance. There were no casualties. Excellent brawn is now being made, and is eaten by both whites and blacks. It is made from ox and horse hides. The garrison is very cheerful, very dry, very hungry." On May 5th the Boers fired on a funeral party. On the 7th they broke the Sabbath truce.

Rumours began to accumulate at Lorenco Marquez of "severe fighting on the western border." It was stated, too, that "B.-P.'s" brother, Major B. F. S. Baden-Powell, of the 1st Scots Guards, had an important command in "the relief column." The command of this column was allotted in some reports to Sir Charles Warren, who was supposed to have been appointed Military Governor of Griqualand West as a result of the Spion Kop disaster; by other

reports to Lord Kitchener, of whom nothing had been heard for several days; by others, again, to Colonel Mahon, of the 8th Royal Irish Hussars, and one of Lord Kitchener's most trusted officers. On the 7th of May Colonel Baden-Powell sent to Lord Roberts another cheery message: "All going well; fever decreasing; garrison cheerful; food will last till about June 10th."

On May 9th "B.-P." wired to the Mayor of Brisbane: "We highly appreciate Queensland's kind and encouraging message [of April 24th]. We hope eventually to beat off the enemy." On the same day the cheery Colonel telegraphed to London accepting the honour of a complimentary dinner which members of the Powell family were desirous of giving him upon his return to London in the following characteristic message: "Delighted accept kind invitation directly fortune permits.—BADEN-POWELL."

On May 10th (two days before Lord Roberts occupied Kroonstad) Pretoria sent out a report that a British force of three thousand men, advancing along the Bechuana railway, had reached Vryburg—ninety-seven miles from Mafeking. Cape Town was in receipt of information to the same effect.

On May 17th the mysterious relief column was stated to have been actively engaged with the enemy near Kraaipan, the scene of the memorable

armoured train incident in October, 1899. The fighting was said to have taken place on the 15th, and to have resulted in a Boer victory. However, the *Daily Mail* on the 17th published authentic information of a strong Boer censorship at Pretoria; and it was felt in London that if the Boers had really anything of which to boast there would have been no need to keep the burghers in Pretoria in ignorance of the success of their arms in the West. And we had to repress our eagerness and disbelieve both the reports which assured us that Mafeking had at last been relieved and those to the effect that on May 12th, as the sequel to one more determined assault, General Snyman had after all overpowered the eagle in the Bechuana "pigeon-house." The only relief vouchsafed the public was in the news of General Buller's rapid advance on Newcastle, in the East, and General Hunter's occupation of Christiana, in the South.

The public tension was exemplified by further questions asked in the House of Commons on the afternoon of May 17th, when the Under-Secretary of State for War said: "I regret that I am unable to give the House the only news which could relieve the anxiety as to the condition of the heroic garrison. Perhaps I may say, although it is a consideration that must have occurred to hon. members, that if the event which we so earnestly desire takes place,

the intelligence of it cannot reach us for two days, and very possibly not for five days." In reply to Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett, who asked if there was any information as to the reported repulse of the British and the serious assault on Mafeking, Mr. Wyndham added: "No. That report comes from a Boer source, and I am not prepared to criticise it."

At this date all news from Mafeking sent south had to be carried by despatch riders to Warrenton, a place 170 miles distant, and there put on the field telegraph. News sent north had to be carried to Ootsi, cabled to Beira, and thence wired to England *viâ* Lorenco Marquez.

In the interval of waiting for the good news to come from Mafeking by one or other of these routes the thoughts of many began to turn to the casualty list that lingered in the background. I believe the only official list obtainable so far is that sent by Lady Sarah Wilson to the *Daily Mail*. This, however, only brings the sad figures down to the end of February. Compiled by Mr. Ronald Moncrieff, Extra A.D.C., it is as follows:—

COMBATANTS.

	Officers.	Men.	Total.
Killed and died of wounds	6	53	59
Wounded	11	90	101
Missing	1	86	87
Died of sickness	0	8	8
	18	187	205

CIVILIANS, NON-COMBATANTS, AND NATIVES.

	Men.	Women and Children.	Natives.	Total.
Killed.....	2	4	34	40
Wounded	6	3	95	104
	8	7	129	144
Grand total			349	

"May 18th" came at last. It was evident as the day drew towards evening that London had within its boundaries more than its normal number of inhabitants. Passers-by in the street had the aimless yet anxious look of those who wait. Late in the afternoon, following the intelligence of the re-occupation of Newcastle, came the news that Lord Methuen had entered Hoopstad, Generals Duprez and Daniels surrendering to him; that General Hamilton's cavalry, under Colonel Broadwood, had taken Lindley, which President Steyn had just made the new capital of the Free State; and that the Mounted Infantry of General Hutton had surprised and captured Commandant Botha. For a brief space some excitement was aroused by the suggestion that the Commandant Botha alluded to was the Boer commander-in-chief, the redoubtable Louis. But once a doubt was cast upon this suggestion the news fell flat. It was not what the public were waiting for.

Gradually the main thoroughfares resumed their ordinary aspect. By nine o'clock at night it

appeared as if the long series of deceptive rumours had taken away the heart of the people. There was only one more paper to be issued—the ten o'clock edition of the *Evening News*. That would do "after the theatres."

In Pall Mall, half swallowed up in the gloom that seems always to wrap the War Office, a small crowd kept vigil. They stood as closely as they were permitted to do to the railings through which could be seen on the door of the central entrance to the building the familiar legend "No News." The solitary Guardsman on duty was given scarce space enough in which to perform his "sentry-go." The police at the open outer gate were bombarded with questions. Among the chief callers was the Duke of Connaught, to whom Baden-Powell dedicated his book on pig-sticking.

The large hand of the clock in the lobby crept slowly down the dial, and turned once more on its monotonous course. Without, the little crowd was beginning to diminish—when on the night breeze westward borne there came a steady sound which rose above the dull roar of the distant traffic. Even those whom long waiting had made sceptical paused to listen.

"Did ye not hear it?—No; 'twas but the wind."

But there was no doubt about that cry. Screamed

by the leather-throats of the night news runners, taken up by the voices of a small but enthusiastic body of men, women, and boys, making their way to the centre of official information, it was: "Relief of Mafeking!" The *Evening News* ten o'clock edition had come out before its usual time with the momentous news, which was blazoned forth on contents-bills of red, white, and blue. In the space reserved for "Latest News" was printed the following:—

RELIEF OF MAFEKING.

MAFEKING HAS BEEN RELIEVED.

FOOD HAS ENTERED THE GARRISON.

ENEMY DISPERSED.

—Reuter.

The portals of the War Office, however, still bore the legend "No News." Within, the courteous principal in charge, Mr. H. J. Gibson, could add nothing to the news in the way of corroboration. Turning eastward again, one found the Strand and Fleet Street half-suffocated as it were with suppressed excitement. The moment of *abandon* had not yet come. But, everywhere, young and old were eagerly scanning the evening paper above referred to, which, by the way, soon had its rivals. Meanwhile, crowds had collected outside the various newspaper offices, in the windows of which the main fact of the relief

had been pasted up. The *Daily Graphic* office displayed a picture of Baden-Powell wreathed with intertwined Union Jacks.

Soon we learned how the good news came. It had been travelling over the cables from Pretoria since 11.35 a.m. It found its way to Reuter's offices in Old Jewry at 9.17 p.m. Thence it was despatched to every corner of the globe; it was flashed to the Exchange offices and was soon being worked off on the tape machines in clubland. The historic message is as follows:—

"PRETORIA, *May* 18.—It is officially announced that when the laagers and forts around Mafeking had been severely bombarded the siege was abandoned by the Boers. A British force advancing from the south then took possession of the town.—REUTER."

It was inferred that the British relief force vigorously attacked the Boer laagers and forts around the beleagured town and compelled the Boers to raise the siege.

By 10.30 p.m. all London had given itself up to the joy of the occasion. Within a few minutes after the telegram had reached the Mansion House it was posted up. A few more moments passed, and traffic was impossible. From the Mansion House to Hyde Park Corner, where Mrs. Baden-Powell was serenaded by ten thousand people, the city had burst into bunting. Flags flew from roofs and windows. Vehicles of all descriptions were bedizened with

Union Jacks. The Lord Mayor came out on to the balcony of the Mansion House and addressed the cheering thousands assembled there. His few words took many minutes in the delivery. They were punctuated with cheers for Baden-Powell and the singing of the National Anthem.

The Lord Mayor said: "I wish the music of your cheers could reach Mafeking. For seven long, weary months a handful has been opposed by a horde. We never doubted what the end would be. British pluck and valour when used in a right cause must triumph. The heart of every one of you vibrates with intense loyalty and enthusiasm. The conscience of every one of you declares that you have fought a righteous and a just cause. We have fought for our glorious tradition of equality and freedom, not for ourselves alone, but for all those nations which have clustered in South Africa practically under the protection of the British flag. Three cheers for Baden-Powell! Three cheers for Lord Roberts! The people in Bloemfontein and Mafeking are now singing 'God Save the Queen.' Now sing it yourselves." And right well was the Anthem taken up again.

As the telegrams came in on the following day, it was made known to us in London that the joy of the city was the joy of the kingdom and of all parts of the Empire. The joy was lasting as it was deep and genuine. Ample evidence of this was found in the churches on the Sunday.

The first official news of the relief of Mafeking reached London in a telegram sent to the Colonial Office by Sir Alfred Milner, who received the information from General Barton. General Barton's brigade, acting under General Hunter's instructions, was then at Taungs in support of the relief column. The relief column, led by Brevet-Colonel Bryan Thomas Mahon, D.S.O., was a composite force of about 2,300 picked Light Horse from Ladysmith and Kimberley, a section of Fusiliers, and a detachment of Royal Horse Artillery with "pom-poms." Major Baden-Powell was with the column.

Leaving Barkley West on May 4th the column covered 130 miles in five days. Vryburg was reached on May 9th. On Sunday, May 13th, the Boers attacked the force in thick bush near Kraaipan, and were routed. On the same day Lieutenant Eloff conducted an assault on Mafeking. This also failed, Eloff himself being captured.

On May 15th Colonel Mahon joined Colonel Plumer at Jan Massibi's, a spot 25 miles west of Mafeking and some 200 miles from Barkley West. Colonel Plumer had on the 14th been joined by some Canadians and Queenslanders belonging to General Carrington's command. The enemy was attacked and utterly defeated after heavy fighting, and Mafeking was entered by the relieving force at 4 a.m. on May 17th. At 9 a.m., the relief and defence forces combined moved out, attacked the

enemy's head laager, shelled the enemy out, and to quote Baden-Powell's official report to Lord Roberts, "nearly captured Snyman."

In the course of an interview Colonel Baden-Powell was asked by Reuter's correspondent in Mafeking for a message to the British people. He replied that an exaggerated idea had been entertained of the importance of his personality, whereas, he proceeded, "I look on myself as the figure-head of the good ship *Mafeking*. It has been her stout canvas and the shape of her brave hull that have really shoved the ship along and brought her safely through her stormy cruise; so, whenever I read nice things people say about me, I take it that they said them inasmuch as I am the head and the representative of the garrison."

Mrs. Baden-Powell received a telegram from her sons at Mafeking, dated May 17th. It stated that Major Baden Baden-Powell, Scots Guards, had that day entered the town, and that all was going well. The message was signed by both brothers, the signatures being "Stephenson and Baden."

Among the earliest of the innumerable telegrams of congratulation that reached Mrs. Baden-Powell was a gracious message from the Queen, whose appointment of the Hero of Mafeking to the rank of Major-General "for distinguished service in the field" was gazetted on May 22nd.

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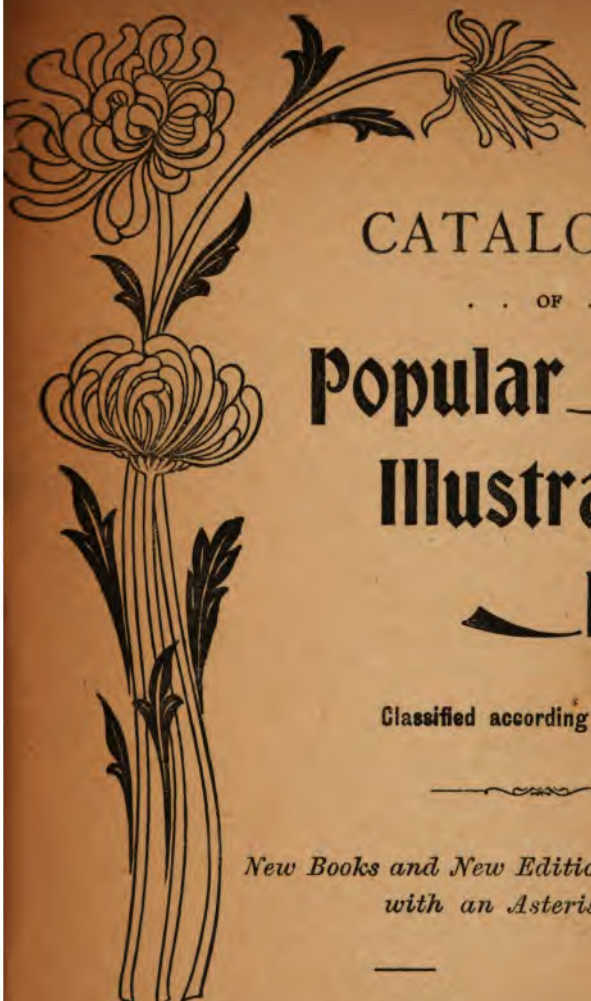

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